

3.

A Treatise of  
**SELF-EXAMINATION**  
In order to the  
**Worthy Receiving**  
OF THE  
**HOLY COMMUNION,**  
TOGETHER  
With suitable PRAYERS.

---

By Monsieur *John Claude* Minister of  
the Reformed Church at *Paris*, being his  
Meditations since the late Persecutions of  
the Protestants in *France*.

---

*Let a man examine himself, and so let  
him eat of that Bread and drink of  
that Cup, 1 Cor. 11. 28.*

---

Faithfully Translated for the bene-  
fit of the Reader.

---

L O N D O N,  
Printed for *Samuel Smith* Book-  
seller, at the *Prince's-Arms* in  
*St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1683.





---

---

TO THE  
READER.

**A**mongst those many debates which grow too warm between the several Parties in this Nation, to the great scandal of Religion and the disturbing of the Government, and the unchristian despite and censure one of another; I doubt not but there are many serious

A 2 and

To the Reader.

and sober Christians, who  
choose rather to retire in-  
to themselves and look in-  
to the state of their own  
Souls, whilst others make  
this restless noise abroad.

And therefore I recom-  
mend this short Treatise  
to these, to spend a few  
hours in the reading and  
meditating upon it, whilst  
others waste their time  
in Pamphlets and Libels.

I confess we have sever-  
al very eminent pieces,  
written by the Learned,  
Ortho-

To the Reader.

Orthodox and laborious  
Doctours of our own  
Church, concerning the  
same subject that I here  
offer to you: But I re-  
member Solomon at the  
building of the Temple,  
made use not only of ma-  
terials which his own  
Country abounded in, but  
also fetched some from the  
Kingdom of Tyre.

In our Temporal con-  
cerns, though our own  
Nation afford us great  
plenty for the necessities

To the Reader.

of Food and Raiment, yet  
how many thousands are  
employed in importation  
of forreign Commodities!  
The conveniencies of our  
Souls are to be regarded  
as well as those of our  
Bodies ; and though we  
are, blessed be God, furni-  
shed with these in our  
own Country, as fully as  
any Nation in the World,  
yet the most learned Do-  
ctors cannot say but they  
are much beholden to  
those of other Churches,  
and

To the Reader.

and that they have taken  
in much light from them;  
and therefore why may  
not Christians of other  
capacities receive benefit  
from the labours of those  
of another Church. This  
was my design in transla-  
ting this Treatise into our  
native Tongue, and if  
any receive advantage by  
it, I have what I inten-  
ded; however I have  
not lost my labour, for in  
this work I have the bet-  
ter digested the pious me-  
ditations

To the Reader.

ditions of the Author,  
to the satisfaction of my  
own mind. I do not que-  
stion but that whoever  
reads it, will thank the  
Author for publishing this  
Edition, and giving us  
that to our use, which you  
see in the Advertisement  
he purposed for his own.  
Self-Examination is a  
difficult task and a great  
work, and such as give  
us good Rules for the fa-  
cilitating it, and preven-  
ting mistakes, deserve  
very

To the Reader.

very well from us.

The time when the Author wrote this was since the Reformed Church in France had her persecutions renewed against her, and in afflictions Men are most thoughtful, and make the strictest inquiries into their own hearts; so that we may very well believe that we have not only the learning and judgment, but also the fresh experience of the Author delivered

To the Reader.

*livered to us in many of  
his Rules. I will say  
no more but leave every  
Man to use it as he finds  
it, and value it as it de-  
serves.*

---

*An*



---

---

## An Advertisement.

**T**He Author of this Treatise, having already for some time composed it for his own particular use, and for the use of some other persons who had desired it : It happned that some Printer surreptitiously published a Copy of it, which was full of gross faults, without order, without distinction, and which in divers places was not only without sense, but also represented often a false sense, and contrary to that of the Author. This is that which obliged him himself to make this Edition, of which  
the

## Advertisement.

the publick is advertised that  
they might not take for his Work  
an Edition which is almost eve-  
ry where corrupt, which he is o-  
bliged to disown, acknowledging  
none but this second to be his.



THE



THE  
EXAMINATION  
OF A  
MAN'S SELF

IN

Order to prepare him

FOR THE

**Communion.**

CHAP. I.

*Of the necessity of Self-Examination.*

**A**S God never presents him-  
self to the Creatures eyes,  
but when he is attended  
with all the marks of his infinite

B

Maje-

Majesty : The Creature also ought never to appear before him without being seized with a Religious fear, and without his utmost endeavours of putting himself into an estate of respect, and profound humility. We find in the History of the Old Testament, that when the Lord manifested himself first to *Moses*, under the Image of a burning Bush; *Moses* surprised and astonished at this Object, would immediately have drawn near, that he might more particularly have discovered the miracle ; but at the same instant he heard a voice, saying unto him, *Exod. 3. Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*

God would stop that temerarious and præcipitant motion of *Moses*, which would have carried him to the Bush ; because where the presence of God is, Man can never

never use too much præcaution, nor act with too much reservedness. And as to the command of pulling off his shoes, it is certain that under the figure of that corporal action, he commanded an interiour Sanctification : For it was as if he had ordained him to deuest himself of all that he had, that was mean and terrestial, and to purifie himself of all his former Soils.

We may say with truth, that the Sacrament of the Holy Supper which Jesus Christ hath established in his Church, hath something more Venerable and more Sacred then the Bush of *Moses*. I confess that our Eyes discover nothing that is either surprizing or miraculous. We regard not the matter, the Bread and the Wine, which are ordinary objects and things of small value: But as mean and vile as the matter is,

we must not doubt but God is present in this holy action, with all the lustre of his Grandeur and Majesty, since it is a mystery of his grace, and an authentick pledg of his Covenant with us, so that we must not approach it without a just and lawful preparation. Put off then, miserable sinner, thy shoes from thy feet, quit thy Impurities, sanctifie thy Conscience, place thy self in a condition of Humiliation and Piety ; for the place where thou art, is not holy Earth, but an August Heaven, the Throne of the Lamb of God, before whom the Angels attend, and where the Eternal Father is set with his Son in glory.

These holy preparations chiefly consist in a solid and exact Examination, which every one ought to make of himself, for on that partly depend the motions, and sentiments of Piety, of Repentance,

pentance, of Confidence and De-  
 votion, which ought to accompa-  
 ny us when we approach the Ta-  
 ble of our Lord ; but to judge the  
 better of the necessity of this Ex-  
 amination, it is requisite that we  
 make a more particular reflexion  
 upon the greatness and impor-  
 tance of the action of the Com-  
 munion ; for it is not an ordi-  
 nary action, or of little conse-  
 quence. This Divine Sacrament  
 is an Abridgment of all that is  
 more great and more admirable  
 in Religion, a Temple which in-  
 closes Nature, Grace and Glory,  
 a Sanctuary where God and Men  
 meet together, in Comparifon,  
 in Oppofition, and in Communi-  
 on : to wit, in Comparifon of his  
 Sovereign Majefty with our No-  
 thing ; in Oppofition of his Ju-  
 ftice with our Perversnefs ; and  
 in Communion of his Love, and  
 his Mercy, with our Faith and



our Regeneration. He is there as a Creator, as a Master, as a Law-giver, in all the Rights that his only Eternal Essence, and the first Cause of all things gives him over us ; and we are there in this mystical Repast, to render him the most profound, and most perfect Homage of our dependance. He is there as a God who hath made the World, who preserves it, who governs it, and who hath given Laws to Men, setting before their Eyes on the one hand the punishments of his wrath, and on the other the just advantages of his blessing : And we are there to confess that all that we are, and all that we have is from him, that we are under a natural and indispensable obligation to observe his Laws, and that if we have violated them, our condemnation is just. Again, he is there as a Judge upon his Tribunal.



nal beset round with all the punishments of his vengeance ; a Judge which sees all, who examines all, who discerns all, who sounds all hearts, and the most secret motions of the Soul, and who condemns crimes, wheresoever he finds them. And we are there as unhappy Criminals, whom the disobedience of the first Man hath plunged, with all the rest of Mankind into a general corruption, which makes us slaves of Satan, of Hell, and Death, and hath sunk us into an Eternal ruine. In fine, he is there as a God of Mercy and Peace, who seeing us in this horrible misery, hath laid a design to rescue us out of it, by pardoning our sins and raising us to a hope of his Kingdom.

There are displayed as in a precious draught all the admirable ways which God hath made

use of to save us, to wit, the Embassy of Jesus Christ, and all his Oeconomy. This divine Saviour presents himself there, on the one side invested with all the glory of his natural condition, and on the other side environed with all the ignominies, and all the do-lours of his annihilation, smeared and covered with his precious blood which he shed for us. There all the marvels of his Incarnation meet together, all the sufferings of his Life, all the infirmities, and all the accidents which accompanied him upon Earth; the cruel persecutions of his Enemies, the fierce assaults the Devil offered him, his anguishes in the Garden of *Gethsemane*, his Arrest, his Condemnation, his Nakedness, his Cross, his Crown of Thorns, his Scarlet Robe, his Gaul, his Vinegar; in a word, there is all the sad appearances of his bloody Death.

Death. But these Objects are not alone, they shew us others also; for we see there the entire and perfect innocence of the person of our Redeemer, the infinite and inestimable price of his Sacrifice, which alone hath been able to render the Divinity favourable to us; the ardent Love, and immense Goodness, which made him so voluntarily expose his Life for our Salvation. We see there the Eternal glory which hath followed his abasement, and which is the just Crown of his Combats; his Resurrection, his Ascension into Heaven, his sitting at the Right-hand of God, and the effusion of his Holy Spirit which he made, and of his light throughout the World. And as Jesus Christ presents himself to us in this action, under all the respects of his Grace; so on our part we ought to be there with

all the sentiments of Faith, of Gratitude, of Contrition, of hope, of Zeal, which these great mysteries deserve, if we would gather the fruits for which they are appointed : From hence we may easily know, that we are not to thrust our selves lightly upon so important a Communion ; but on the contrary to prepare our selves by a reflexion of our Souls upon themselves, by an elevation of our thoughts above all these earthly things, and by a sincere animadversion upon our selves, to see if we are not entirely unworthy to approach this Divine Table.

This necessity appears also if we cast our Eyes upon the consequences of a good and bad Communion. For it is true, if we receive this heavenly Sacrament as we ought, we receive life and a blessed Immortality, we find there  
 peace

peace with God, joy and consolation of Soul, and a right to the Eternal inheritance : But if on the contrary we partake unworthily, this Holy Communion is a fire which consumes our Bowels, we have in it a Death and Condemnation assured to us. We have then a great concern not to come without a just preparation, for fear that instead of taking a remedy, we take poyson there, and lest it should hasten and aggravate our Judgment. This is the Reason why *St. Paul* treating upon this subject in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, perceiving himself possessed with a holy fear, seeing the danger Communicants expose themselves to, saith; *Let every one examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily,*  
*eateth*

1 Cor. 11

*eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.*

Besides the necessity of this Examination will appear to you if you consider well, how difficult a thing it is for a Man to know himself well ; and on the contrary, how easie it is to deceive himself, and make too favourable a judgment of himself : Who knows not, how self-love disguises things, and that the natural inclination which we have to esteem our selves, makes us scarce see our faults, or see them so falsely as to call them vertues. We have two Weights, and two Balances, the one for our own sins, which we diminish as much as possible, extenuating and excusing them, and reducing them almost to nothing, and the other for our good qualities, which we exaggerate in the joy of our hearts, exalting them to our  
Eyes

Eyes in a thousand rich colours, and magnifying them infinitely beyond their natural Idea. It concerns us then extreamly to make a serious Examination of our selves, that we may not fall into these illusions which are so ordinary to all Men.

I confess that if to know our selves well, we need no more but to compare our selves with debauched men, who make an open profession of sin, and which pass their lives in wickedness, and uncleanness ; it would be then no great difficulty, every one need no more but to cast his Eyes upon his own conduct, and at the first sight the difference would appear. But the *Pharisee* made his account in this manner. O God, saith he, *I thank thee that I am not as other* Luk. 18.  
*men are, no extortioner, oppressor, nor unjust person, no adulterer,*



*er, nor even as this Publican.* Jesus Christ says, he went not away to his house Justified : If it were no more but to compare our selves with Hypocrites and Impostors, which conceal Vices, and Infamies under the appearances of Sanctity, Every one might easily distinguish themselves from such people : but it is certain that that is not sufficient to judge the verity and solidity of a Christian Regeneration by. We must do more, we must distinguish our vertue from a simple moral honesty, which the Temperature, the Education, Age, and the study of Philosophy may give. We must distinguish it from a civil vertue, which humane Laws, the principles of Society, the example of the wisest Men, Experience, Office and dignities may produce. We must distinguish it from a vain, but specious Image of Sanctity, which



which Superstition, and false Religions may inspire. In fine, we must distinguish it from all those bastard, and imperfect acts of Piety and Sanctity, which may proceed from the first dispositions of grace, and more particularly from that sort of temporary and fragile faith, which Jesus Christ spake of in one of his Parables; for in his noting the different orders of those which hear the Gospel, he saith, *That some receive the word with joy ; but having no root in themselves, endure but for a Season ; but when oppression and persecution cometh for the Gospels sake, by and by they are offended.* But a sincere and saving Regeneration goeth much further. Nevertheless as these natural Characters are quick and sensible, it will not be difficult to discern them from those false and deceitful imitations,

ons, if we could have them pure, and without any mixture of corruption; but alas experience teacheth us but too well, that whatever progress we have made in holiness, the flesh still Combats against the spirit. There are remains of sin ever within us which embroile the estate of our Conscience, and this is that which makes this discernment so hard; yet it is not impossible; else St.

*Paul* would not have  
 2 Cor. 13. said, *Prove your selves, to know whether Jesus Christ*

*be in you.* Being then neither easie nor impossible, and also of so great an importance to us, it is our duty to apply our selves to it with care, and above all not to neglect it upon an occasion where it is so absolutely necessary, as it is in the Holy Sacrament.

In times past God would have the *Israelites* purifie themselves exactly, before they did eat the Passover, therefore you shall find in the second of the *Chronicles*, that many of the people had time to purifie themselves according to the Ordinance of the Law; and having not forbore to eat the Passover, *Hezekiah* made a Prayer for them in these words; *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his Fathers though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.* If God required so great a preparation for the Celebration of the old Passover, how much more may he require from us, when we go about to partake of his Sacrament. This preparation is necessary in all the particular acts of Religion, but chiefly

2 Chron.  
30. 18, 19.

ly in this, since, as we have said, it is a general act which comprehends all the holiest parts of Religion, and in which all the Gates of a Man's Conscience ought to be opened to the Eyes of God, as the Treasures of God are opened therein to the Eyes of Men.

---

## CHAP. II.

*The first Rule to make this Examination well by. To take a true account of our own Sins.*

**I**F you demand in what manner we ought to proceed in this Examination, I answer in general that we must proceed holily, as before the Eyes of our Creator which sees us; sincerely and with a good faith, as acting the

the greatest concern that we have; diligently and scrupulously, as being the most dangerous thing in the World to be deceived in: In fine, you must proceed in an uninterrupted and constant manner, being an action that must not be left imperfect. I shall therefore endeavour to set down in this treatise, some Rules to acquit this duty well, and the first I propose shall be this.

We must Examine our selves of our peculiar sins, I say of our peculiar sins, for as I said before, whilst we are here on Earth, we do not possess a perfect Holyness, nor a Righteousness free from Spots; we shall not attain that glory till we are in Heaven: Nevertheless there is a great difference betwixt the manner of a righteous Man's sinning, and the manner of a wicked Man's. A pious Man may not only fall  
into

into sin, but also into very gross sins, which may stagger the state of the Conscience, and grieve the Holy Spirit; to make use of the Scripture Phrase: Yet betwixt him and a wicked Man, in my opinion, there are four notorious differences.

The first is, That a wicked Man falls, or may fall into the same Excesses very often, by reason that he sins either by habit, or inclination: But a good Man cannot fall often into the same enormous fault, because a habit or criminal inclination cannot be strongly rooted in his heart, being a thing absolutely incompatible with a true Faith, and true Regeneration: when then we see a Man by the return of the same objects, and the same occasion, commit the same crimes, it is an evident sign that he is not in the number of true believers. A true  
Christi-

Christian may be surprized once or twice ; but the horror which he hath for his fault after he hath committed it, and the præcautions that he afterwards takes against his own infirmity, can hardly suffer him to fall back unto the same sins. Grace is represented to us in the Scripture under the figure of a War, and amongst many reasons which be given for it, this appears to me the most proper ; to wit, that in Grace as in a War, they endeavour principally to fortifie those places, which experience hath noted to be the weakest and the most dangerous ; they guard themselves against the attacks of the Enemy, and use such care and industry, that at last they become impregnable. Every Man may fall, but if he be in a perpetual intention of correcting himself, as a true Christian ought to be,

'tis



'tis almost impossible for him to commit the same great offences often.

The second difference consists in that a wicked Man seldom feels any remorse or inward conflicts at the instant he sins; or if he feel any, they come from considerations of moral honesty, and a certain natural confusion, which almost all Men have in the committing evil actions. Though to speak truth, it must be acknowledged, this very sentiment is but very weak in an unregenerate Man, at the instant of his sinning; because he is either dazzled or conquered by the Idea of his joy, or interest, which he receives in the action: yet it may happen that his bare moral honesty may give him some secret remorse. But a pious Man, by which I mean a good Christian; a Man truly called to a knowledge of Jesus



Jesus Christ, that Man, I say, shall never fall into a gross sin, but at the same instant he shall feel pungent dolours in his Soul, strifes and regrets, which proceed not only from impressions of honesty, and that natural modesty, which I hinted before, but from the sense of his offending God, and the breach he hath made in his own hopes of Salvation ; however impetuous the motion of his passion is, or however violent or transported it may be, if he hath truly received the principles of Piety into his heart, or if you will allow me to say so, if he hath received the Seal of grace from above ; it is not possible but his heart should make some resistance, however thick and black the cloud of flesh and blood is, which then covers his Soul : It is not possible but he should see the Image of his God through  
this

this vail, which he so much defaces by his ingratitude. I acknowledge that this cloud of flesh and blood darkens commonly these impressions of God, and takes from them the principal part of their strength and efficacy; for if it were not so, they would not have fallen into the sin: But I say again, that it cannot so cover it, but that there remains ever some sentiments in the bottom of the Soul, from whence proceed those secret pangs, and those hidden remorse, which so astonish and terrifie a Man in the midst of the very joy of his sin.

The third difference is, That an evil Man, that is a Man of the World, whom God hath not regenerated, feels but very few motions toward Repentance after he hath committed his sin; and this happens more especially when his

his crime hath had a happy success; I mean when he hath either received some great joy, or some great profit, or that he hath attained some great honour, and some external glory amongst Men; the successes of which so flatter his ambition, avarice, or voluptuousness, <sup>that they</sup> ~~which~~ complying with self love, permits him scarce to hearken to the voice of Conscience, or the complaints of Vertue, which he hath so unworthily abandoned. It is quite otherwise with a Regenerate Man, when he falls into these sorts of sins by the surprize of his Senses, and by the assaults of his passions, he cannot wallow long in ~~it~~ <sup>em</sup>; he will rise again by Repentance. Whatever happy success he hath had in his sins, it is not possible but the Idea of his God, and of Christ Jesus his Saviour, will represent it self to him;

and make him return from his wanderings. And as when we are amongst strangers who court and caress us, we may easily perceive in those moments of sweetness, that the remembrance of our dear Country and Family diminishes, But when our spirit is no longer thus prepossessed, and we come to our selves, it is impossible but the love of our Country, and of our dear Family, should again lay hold of us, and act powerfully upon our hearts to oblige us to return to it: In the like manner it is easie to apprehend, that in the excess of our passions, and all the time whilst the enchantment of sin lasts, the remembrance of our duty to God, and to Jesus Christ his Son, suffer some Eclipse: But when the force of the charm is ceased, and we come into cold blood, we must necessarily recal the memory

ry of our first state; and then the face of God justly incensed represents it self to us, and creates in our hearts sensible and violent regrets. Happy successes can then have no more effect upon us; for self-love is not that which Reigns in the Soul of a faithful Christian; but the love of God possesses the first place; and though it hath been rudely assaulted by the fury of that party which they call the appetite, and that it hath been as it were constrained to yield to the torrent, it hath not yet wholly lost its rank nor its force: ~~for~~ From hence proceed those bitter displeasures, those sighs, those Tears, those Contritions of heart, those ardent Groans, which we see in the faithful after their fall. We have an eminent Example in the person of *David* in the One and Fiftieth *Psalms*, where he expresses all the lines of a lively

and deep Repentance; *Have mercy*

*Pfal. 51.*

*upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my fault, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*

The Fourth difference is, That a Man who is not Regenerated may <sup>not only</sup> fall, and fall many times in to sins of the same kind; but also at the same time commit many sins of a different kind; Adultery, Treason, Calumny, Injustice: For provided that these sins accommodate themselves to his self-love, and that they delight him in divers respects, it will not be difficult for him

to

to go thorough with them at the same time. But it is not so with a good Christian ; he may indeed, by the surprizal of some great object, suffer himself to be blinded, and commit a great sin : yet he is not capable of committing at the same time many sins of a different kind, nor to fall into a general relinquishment of Sanctity. For as a Body pierced with many wounds, cannot but be in a mortal state, although every wound in particular be not mortal ; so a Regeneration which is set upon in divers places, and combatted by many different sins, certainly knows not how to subsist, although any one of those sins in particular be not altogether incompatible with a state of Regeneration ; I might say also, that it doth not utterly deface and destroy it. This is the first Rule that we give for the Exami-



nation of our selves; to wit, That a Man make reflexion upon his own past sins, and that he judge himself by these four differences, which we have here remarked.

For it is certain that if he find himself engaged in a habitude of vices, which make him often fall into the same offences; if in the moment that he sins, he perceives in himself no resistance; or moreover, if he perceives not but the resistances come from moral and humane honesty, without the Idea of God, and of Jesus Christ his Redeemer, and of his own Salvation, having any part in them; if he doth not quickly recover himself by a lively and true Repentance, accompanied with sharp remorses; if he find himself engaged in many sins of divers sorts; this is a certain mark that the corruptions of nature reign altogether in him, and that he is not truly

truly in the Communion of Jesus Christ: These things are not found in a heart which the Holy Spirit hath sanctified, and to which he hath given the Image of Righteousness. But if in this Examination which he shall make, he find it altogether otherwise, if he sees that he hath committed are rather acts of weakness, and surprise, then effects of an old habit; if in the committing of them he perceives combats in his heart on the part of Grace, and by the principles of Piety; if the victory of the flesh lasts not long, but gives place to a sincere Repentance; if to the measure that his infirmities have prevailed in one point, the other parts of Piety and Sanctity have preserved themselves; we may reasonably conclude that his Regeneration is not vain, and chymical, but he may draw from thence motives of con-

solation and hope, and be perswaded that God loves him, and that he will not abandon him.

---

### CH A P. III.

*The second Rule for this Examination, to take a true account of his own Virtue.*

**I** Say then in the second place, that to discharge a Man's self well of this duty, he must Examine his own probity, which consists as all the World knows in these two points, to abstain from evil, and to do good; or as the Scripture speaks, *To be dead unto sin, and alive unto righteousness.* And upon this subject we may almost see, methinks, the Characters of a Man truly Regenerate.

The

The first is when he abstains from sin, and does good works, not by any inclination, which his natural temper gives him, nor by the force of some habitudes which he hath long contracted, nor by humane considerations taken from his own interest, and his own honour, nor by the force of his reason which tells him that evil is evil, and good is good; but by the considerations of the fear of God, and out of a desire to obey, and please him. This Character is worthy of great consideration, for it is that which distinguishes a Moral, Civil Vertue, from Christian Vertue. We cannot deny but there hath been, and that there are yet to this day almost an infinite number of Men which belong not to Jesus Christ, and in the bottom have no true Regeneration; who yet suffer not themselves, but to live very morally.

rally. How many people were  
 there in the thick darkness of Pa-  
 ganism, whose manners, if we  
 well consider them, would make  
 us ashamed, if they were compa-  
 red with ours ? How many also  
 are there in our Age, amongst  
 those that we call Men of the  
 World, who live and behave  
 themselves in a very honest man-  
 ner, who are courteous, just, ac-  
 cessible, who wrong no Body, but  
 on the contrary seek occasions to  
 oblige ? But it is certain that all  
 the Vertue of this people, how  
 fair soever it appears in the Eyes  
 of Men, is nothing else but a false  
 Image, because it proceeds not  
 from any good principles : They  
 have a horror of Injustice, Vio-  
 lence, Theft, Adultery, and other  
 Crimes of that nature, because  
 their temper will not bear it ; o-  
 thers have corrected their temper  
 by a more regular Education ;  
 others

others abstain from them, because that the simple light of Reason, or that of Philosophical Wisdom makes them see, that there is a disorder and indignity in these sort of actions; less honest means do estrange others from these vices, because that their interest, or their love of vain-glory, resists them: But there is none who abstains upon that true and essential reason which ought to restrain us, which is, that these sins are an abomination to God, and that those who commit them can never be agreeable to him.

I say the same thing of good works: The people of this World who have no part in Regeneration, may yet do the same kind in appearance, as those of good Christians; they may pardon injuries, console the afflicted, succour the oppressed, give Alms to the poor, they may be Chast, So-  
ber,

ber, Just, Vigilant, Gracious, in that manner, that if we judge according to outward appearance, we cannot make any difference between them and the true Children of God. So that it concerns us very much to know that a true Christian forbears not evil things, nor performs good works, by these principles only which I have mentioned, or any others like them: But out of a desire to do the will of God, and to procure his blessing upon us, and to escape his wrath. It imports us then to know that this is the only thing in which the Soul of true vertue consists, which must be an obedience not simply to the Law of Nature, but to the Law of the Lord of Nature, an obedience not out of Constraint, but of Love, not simply to please our selves, and to have nothing to reproach our selves with, but to please God, and



and to glorifie him as much as it is possible for us. This the Scripture teacheth us, when it calls holiness and good works a service which we render unto God. *Let*

*us have grace* (saith the Apostle) *by which we may serve God.* That

Heb. 12.  
28.

*we may serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life,*

Luk. 1. 75.

saith Zacharias : When it calls them a life to God ; *Ye are dead,*

saith the Apostle, *unto sin, but alive unto God,*

Rom. 6.

*through Jesus Christ : A servitude to God ; Ye are made free*

(saith the same Apostle) *from sin, and become servants unto God : A*

*sacrifice to God ; I beseech you by the mercies of God that*

*you present your Body a*

Rom. 12.

*living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

We must then sound our selves upon this point, and endeavour to penetrate our hearts sufficiently, to try if we can discover that motive, which is inseparable from true sanctification. For if we perceive that the thoughts of God enters into the good that we do, and that it is this principally which turns us away from evil, and which puts us upon good works; this is a certain mark of the truth of our Faith: But on the contrary, if we find not these motives, the indication must be very ill.

The second Character is, That a good Man, what ever struglings he hath had in refraining from evil, and doing good; whatever temptations he hath resisted, which would have carried him another way, as we cannot doubt, but that he will have such very often; if <sup>yet</sup> ~~that~~ after having obtained

ned a victory over himself, he perceives a great joy that he hath taken the good part, and ~~that~~ this joy fails not to have its respect to God, and to be grounded upon this, that he hath escaped these dangerous occasions of sinning against him, or that he hath done things that may be agreeable to him. It is otherwise with a Man who is not in a state of Regeneration, when he refrains from evil or doth good, he finds in himself motives conformable to the principles by which he is led; if he hath followed his temper, or the force of an habitude, he perceives neither joy nor grief, he looks upon what he hath done with a kind of indifference: if he hath been actuated by a principle of hypocrisie, or interest, or ambition, or vain-glory, and that the success hath answered to his design, the joy which he hath

is

is wholly of the same nature with his passion, that is to say, worldly, carnal, earthly; and such as God hath no part in: If he hath acted only out of fear of punishment, he hath indeed a joy that he hath not drawn mischief upon himself, but he hath at the same time a regret for not having done that which he desired, <sup>had done</sup> if fear had not restrained him. However there is no unregenerated Man who is sensible of that sweet and inward joy which is grounded upon having done ones duty towards God, and being assured of his approbation. There are none but the faithful who are capable of this; <sup>And</sup> ~~but~~ as they <sup>seem</sup> never fail to have a sense of it, especially when they have had the pain of overcoming themselves, and resisting the power of temptation; <sup>so</sup> this Character seems one of the most sure and infallible, and ought not

not to be lightly passed over.

We must not also neglect a third difference, which distinguishes the faithful from the unregenerate; to wit, That the life of these last, never consists of an universal Righteousness. You may find in them certain sins, and certain moral vertues: But in the same measure that you see them exempt from one, two, three, or four vices, if you examine well you will find them entangled in many others; and in the same measure that you find them shine in some good works of one kind, you will see them fail in many others. The reason of this is, that when a Man is not regenerated by the power of grace, he can never forbear sin, nor do good but by particular principles, which never extend to all sorts of sins, nor to all sorts of vertue: For example, The force of Constituti-

on

on may restrain a Man from thievery, or drunkenness, or from rage and transports of passion; it may carry him to courteousness, to chastity, and sobriety: Interest and vain-glory may interdict him such or such evil actions, and command such or such good ones. But neither natural Temper, nor Interest, nor Ambition, nor Education, nor Example, nor Precepts of Philosophy, nor any such like principles can ever be able to draw a Man from all sorts of vices, and inspire him with all sorts of virtues. There is nothing but heavenly grace, and the Religion of Jesus Christ, which can effect this; these only change a Man with a general change, these only transform him and make him a new Creature. This is the reason why the Men of this World may have a shadow, and image of some particular virtue,

tue, but they cannot have so much as an appearance of an universal Righteousness.

It is otherwise with the truly faithful, The fear of God, and his love, the desire of obeying, and serving, and pleasing him, are principles which regenerate the whole heart, and banish from it all sorts of sins; which establish there a righteousness, and holiness in all respects. I confess, there

remains still much imperfection;

for *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am* Prov. 20.

*pure from my sin?* But

this is because that the holiness being spread throughout, the imperfection of the same also is spread throughout; and not that holiness possesses one place, and iniquity another. It is not as in our natural day, where the light and the darkness are separate; but it is as in the morning, when  
though



though the light is prædōminant, yet it is mingled with darknes. This is a holiness which is compleat and entire, in regard of its parts; \* all the vertues which ought to compose it are there, and all the vices which destroy it are chased away: But yet all the vertues are infirm and languishing, and all the vices are not utterly rooted out. That hinders not nevertheless, but that it is true, that a Christian Regeneration gives an universal inclination to good, and a general aversion to all evil; yet this inclination, and this aversion are not in the highest degree of their perfection. \* It is almost with the new Man in grace, as it is with a young Child in nature, he hath all essential parts which ought to compose him, a Body, and a Soul; a Body furnished with all its different Organs, both inward and outward,

ward, a Soul endued with all its faculties; but yet all this but weak, and far short of what it will be at the age of Manhood.

To make then a just Examination of our selves, we must consider upon this point, and see if we find in our selves, this universal righteousness. This general inclination to all sorts of good works, and this aversion to all sorts of vices. For if in the course of our life we discover some habits of evil, so that our vices and our virtues go together, and make two equal lines, this is a certain mark, that there is no true Regeneration in us.

A fourth Character of this true Regeneration is humility in the practice of virtue, and in the forsaking of vice. Indeed a Man who is not regenerate, but by force of some of those principles, which we have already noted,  
lives

lives mōrally well; fails not to become conceited and prōd, out of a sense of his honesty. For ~~as~~ this is self-love, and not the fear or Love of God, which reigns in his heart; and by necessary consequence, all the good that is seen in ~~them~~ must relate to his own glory, and ~~that~~ he doth it upon the account of <sup>worldly</sup> esteem; or as the Prophet speaks, *that he offers Incense to his own Net, and Sacrifices to his own Drag.* But on the contrary, as it is the Love of God that reigns in the heart of the faithful, and ~~that~~ <sup>as</sup> he regards that always as his last end, or as his principal object; it is impossible but all that he sees good in himself should redound to the glory of God, and that he should esteem himself obliged for it, as for a received grace. In the sentiment then of his best actions, he must remain humble; whatever joy he hath,

be-

because the more good works he doth, the nearer he is to God; *likeness*, and by consequence, is the more dazzled on all sides, by the lustre of his Majesty. The more good he doth, the more he thinks of God; and the more he thinks of him, the more he compares himself with him; and in this comparison, knows himself to be dust and ashes. When *David* said in the second *Psalms*, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling*; he had not a design to inspire us with a fright and terror, for they are not consistent with joy; for they are apter to make us fly from the presence of God, than to draw near to serve him: He only therefore would inculcate to us that humility, which resists not joy; but is the inseparable Companion, of the good works of the Faithful.

In

In fine, The fifth Character that must be observed upon this subject is, That a true Christian never doth good works, or turns away from the occasions of sin, but there remains with him continually an ardent desire to go further, and advance himself more in the ways of holiness. The reason proceeds from this faithful Man's finding signs, and testimonies of his Election, and Communion with Jesus Christ in the good works that he performs: and on the contrary, his confidence in this respect is troubled by the sins he commits. And this

his untroubled

confidence

produceth in him, upon the consideration of his good works, that *glorious and unspeakable joy* which the Scripture mentions: That *peace of God which passeth all understanding.*

Phil. 4.

'Tis that <sup>internal</sup> rest, that assurance

rance which made *David* cry out,  
*The Lord is my Light and*  
*my Salvation, whom then* Psal. 27.

*shall I fear? The Lord is*  
*the strength of my life, of whom then*  
*shall I be afraid?* And it is that  
 also which produces the desire  
 that I have spoke of, of estāblish-  
 ing themselves in āll good; for he  
 looks upon his good works, as the  
 pledges of the Lōve that God  
 bears him, and as the foundātions  
 of that great hope which he hath:  
 From whence it follows, that he  
 endeavours continually to make  
 a progress in his Sanctity; that  
 since according to the measure  
 that his hōliness advanceth, the  
 sense of his Election and of his  
 Communion with Jesus Christ  
 his Saviour advances also, and his  
 hope confirms it self more and  
 more; whereas by his sins, the first  
 of these is very much trōu-  
 bled, and the second much shā-

enior

D

ken.

ken. Again, the more he advances in Piety, the more he persuades himself that he hath performed his duty, and that he is acceptable to God; by reason of which, the good works that he doth are a Sput to him, and an encouragement to proceed. That which we say in disgrace of a covetous Man, that he is never content with what he hath, that he is always desiring more; we may say in the praise of a good man, who makes himself a treasure of his good actions, he never saith it is enough, he uncessantly wishes to encrease the number of them; upon which account Jesus Christ attributes to him an hunger and athirst: *Blessed* Math. 5. 6. *(saith he) are they that are ever hungry and thirst after Righteousness.*

It is not so with an unregenerate Man; for when he shall do  
some



some works mōrally good, either by the force of his tēper, or by a principle of hypōcrisie and interest; he perceives no such ardent desire in himself to advance in this holiness, which we speak of: The actions which come from the Tēper of a Man, bringing not with them, that keen zēal, which excite him to go on; and much less those, which proceed from hypōcrisie or interest. I confess, that those who do good for the esteem that they have of good it self, may be sensible of something which comes near this desire which we have in hand; but that will never be a desire to please God, and to be agreeable to him, it will only be a desire to do nothing which may derogate from right and natural equity. Now it is true, that in Men whom God hath not yet Regenerated, that desire cannot be ex-

tremely quick and lively; However honest and clear their sentiments are, they cannot equal that *desire* which a good Man hath; to acquire more and more the favour and grace of his God.

We must then make use of this means also, if we would proceed as we ought in the Examination of our selves, and must join with the others, that which I have proposed in this third Rule. They are all of a natural and easie use, and I am perswaded if we would execute them well, we might make a certain judgment upon our selves : For as on the one side every one may know easily, if in the good that he doth, he hath a regard to God, and his own Conscience; if after he hath determined to do it, he perceives a joy for having taken the good part; if he perceives in his heart a general inclination to this good, and

and a general aversion to all which is called sin; if his good works are accompanied with humility and debasement before God; if to that measure that he hath done good, he perceives a desire in himself to do more; <sup>that then</sup> he hath ~~then~~ another solid and certain ground, to conclude from all this, the truth of his faith, and the sincerity of his conversion: So on the other side, if he finds nothing of all this; he may conclude, the insincerity of his faith & conversion.

## CHAP. IV.

*The third Rule. To take a true measure of ones self in the acts of every particular vertue.*

**H**Owever, certain the Rule is that I come from laying down in the precedent Chapter; ~~but~~ we must not rest there.

The matter in agitation is so necessary and important, for the rest and calm of our Conscience, that we cannot acquit our selves too exactly therein, Methinks then that it is good to Examine ones self particularly upon the proper acts of every vertue: For it is not possible that a simple moral vertue, or a false Regeneration, or simple dispositions towards Conversion, should avail in the exercise of particular vertues; or act so like the products of true Piety, that there should be no possible means of discerning the one from the other.

To give then some direction upon this subject, I say first, that the proper and essential marks of a true faith, are to love the reading of the Word of God, to frequent the Assemblies where it is Preached, to search those Books which give us intelligence, to  
have

have a curiosity towards the mysteries of Salvation, to make a particular application to yourself as you apprehend them, and meditate upon them, to be touched in general with all the Divine perfections that appear in those mysteries; and chiefly in those three, of his infinite Majesty, his perfect holiness, and unspeakable love to us: For these three things faith chooses out above all the rest of the attributes of God to meditate upon, because they most touch our hearts, and our hearts cannot betray and deceive themselves upon this subject.

Concerning doubts which are as the weaknesse and sickness of faith, <sup>they</sup> which are common to true believers, and those that are temporary believers, that is, such whose faith endures but for a time, But there is this difference between them, that in an unre-

regenerate Man, who is one of those temporary believers, the doubts are hearkened to, and received with some sort of joy, but in a true believer they never arise without causing a kind of grief; because the love which we bear to God, cannot suffer his truth to be combated with any appearances, that seem to overthrow it. False believers feel nothing of this, no loving God enough, to be thus concerned for his glory. A true believer seeks instantly to satisfy himself in all his doubts, they cannot dwell long with him, and when he is satisfied, he receives a secret joy. A false believer scarce feels that joy, or is very glad of remaining in his doubts, that he may ever leave the carnal part in Arms to resist grace, not being willing that the Spirit of the World which is in him, should be entirely with-

out

out defence; or if he gets out of these doubts by some enquiries into these truths, he cannot see this triumph of truth, without some sort of displeasure and mortification.

As to the acts of hope, they may be common to a true and false believer, for there is nothing upon which men flatter themselves so easily as upon this: But yet one may remark these differences between them: The one is that the object of the hope of a false believer, is principally his own happiness, without regard to the principle, from whom he expects it. Whereas the true believer on the other side, much more regards the ineffable Love of God, which he expects one day from his hope, rather than the other advantages which can happen unto him: And the reason is because a false believer, and



an half Regenerate Man hath self-love for his first Principle, and interest for his last End, he considers himself more then God; but a true Believer loves God above all things, from whence it proceeds that an unbeliever is almost totally fix'd upon his own interest; and from whence<sup>ever</sup> his felicity comes, he considers it not, if he be happy it is all he desires. But a true Christian establishes himself principally upon his sentiment of the love of God towards him, and is ravished by finding himself in his favour, and being in the grace of his good Father, valuing that at a far greater rate, then all the advantages and prosperities that can come from it.

Besides an unbeliever that hath but yet received some dispositions towards a Conversion, and not the form of true piety, feels him-  
self

self chiefly concerned with that  
 share of hope which gives him a  
 prospect of being exempted from  
 all manner of miseries, and an  
 enjoyment of a thousand joys,  
 and a thousand benefits, but in  
 regard of a full Sanctification, and  
 an intire abolition of Vices, he  
 hath but small concernment.  
 Whereas a true Christian finds  
 himself, though concerned indeed  
 by a thirst of his happiness, yet  
 incomparably more upon the ac-  
 count of Grace. The cause of  
 this difference is that in the half  
 Conversion of the unbeliever,  
 sin still remains Master of the  
 powers of his heart, and is only  
 withstood by self-love, which  
 fears the consequences of sin, and  
 hath therefore no aversion to sin,  
 but what arises from that fear.  
 But a true Christian hath con-  
 ceived a real aversion against sin  
 it self, and watches and fights a-  
 gainst

an half Regenerate Man hath self-love for his first Principle, and interest for his last End, he considers himself more then God; but a true Believer loves God above all things, from whence it proceeds that an unbeliever is almost totally fix'd upon his own interest; and from whence<sup>ever</sup> his felicity comes, he considers it not, if he be happy it is all he desires. But a true Christian establishes himself principally upon his sentiment of the love of God towards him, and is ravished by finding himself in his favour, and being in the grace of his good Father, valuing that at a far greater rate, then all the advantages and prosperities that can come from it.

Besides an unbeliever that hath but yet received some dispositions towards a Conversion, and not the form of true piety, feels him-  
self

self chiefly concerned with that  
 share of hope which gives him a  
 prospect of being exempted from  
 all manner of miseries, and an  
 enjoyment of a thousand joys,  
 and a thousand benefits, but in  
 regard of a full Sanctification, and  
 an intire abolition of Vices, he  
 hath but small concernment.  
 Whereas a true Christian finds  
 himself, though concerned indeed  
 by a thirst of his happinefs, yet  
 incomparably more upon the ac-  
 count of Grace. The cause of  
 this difference is that in the half  
 Conversion of the unbeliever,  
 sin still remains Master of the  
 powers of his heart, and is only  
 withstood by self-love, which  
 fears the consequences of sin, and  
 hath therefore no aversion to sin,  
 but what arises from that fear.  
 But a true Christian hath con-  
 ceived a real aversion against sin:  
 it self, and watches and fights a-  
 gainst

gainst it, not only in the Idea of its ill consequences, but the proper Idea of its mischief, as the greatest Enemy of Man's Excellency, and so abominable that it must naturally be the object of God's hate. When then an unregenerate Man hopes, he is transported to see that happy day, which shall deliver him from all the punishments due to his sin, and put him in possession of a Celestial Life and Immortality. But a true Believer goes further, he is ravished with the thoughts of that happy day, which shall deliver him fully from sin it self, which is as a load and burthen that presses him down, and as a Disease of which he ardently desires a Cure.

I come to Charity: Every one knows that it hath two Objects, God and our Neighbour. And for that which respects God, we can-

cannot in my opinion deny but a temporal Believer, that is to say, a Man of the number of those whom Jesus Christ describes in the parable of the Sower, who believe not but for a season, may sometimes have some light sentiments of love to God; but they are very different from those which a true regenerate Man hath. As the first ever loves himself more then God, all that he perceives of love to God, consists in nothing but some acts of acknowledgment, for the things he hopes for; and these motions are neither very lively nor very deep, for a Soul which is not yet truly Converted, is always ungrateful. But a true Believer perceives himself infinitely obliged to his God, not only for the good things he hath received, and for those which he hopes for, but principally because God hath loved him out of pure

pure mercy, without his having any manner of merit in him, and when he was altogether worthy of his hatred.

Again he loves God with that love which they call a love of respect, and esteem, which is founded upon the ineffable perfections of the Divinity, which renders it infinitely worthy of the love of all Creatures : He loves him with a love of desire, which is that which *David* hath so well expressed in the 42 *Psalm*, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so longeth my Soul after thee O God ; my Soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God, when shall I come and appear before the presence of God.* He loves him with a love of proximity, and relation, considering him as his Creator, his Redeemer, and his Father: In fine he loves him with that which we call a love of service,



vice, for he would bring all his life, all his thoughts, his words and actions to the glory of God, as the last end, which he ought to have always before his Eyes.

This true and solid love which the faithful Christian hath for God discovers it self, principally in those occasions where the name of God, or his Son Jesus Christ is either glorified or dishonoured by others. For at such conjunctures an Unregenerate Man will be sure to have regard to the interest, that he may make in the actions of others, and if he find himself concerned in person, or imagines he may receive a prejudice from it, he will have a vexation and displeasure, although they honour God; and if they do dishonour God, he will have joy, if he find advantage to himself by it. For as I have often repeated before, Self love rules  
and

and reigns in an heart that is not yet truly Converted.

A true Believer on the contrary, never sees any actions wherein God is in the least manner glorified, without joy ; nor sees others ever dishonour him, without having a sensible displeasure, whether they make to his own Personal interest or not, he is not much concerned, but always finds himself sufficiently satisfied in the interest of God. 'Tis a Character which we see in the Charity of *St. Paul*, when he was in *Athens* he saw in that City a number of reigning Superstitions, the History observes, that his Spirit was exasperated at the view of those false devotions, which nevertheless did not personally offend him. And on the other side he saw many stirred up with jealousy against him, who preached the Gospel out of a principle of Vain-glory,

glory; whatsoever personal interest he had against the action of those persons, who seemed to take a part of the honour of his Apostleship from him, yet he was joyful to see that the Gospel nevertheless was preached: *Some indeed,* says he, *preach Christ even of envy and strife, and* 1 Philip. *some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

As to the second object of Charity, which is our Neighbour, I confess that Justice, Temperance, Mildness, Compassion, are moral Vertues, that may be found in unregenerate Persons. The same distincti-

distinctions which we give to those *St. Paul* calls the Household of Faith, false Religions have also ; a Pagan indisputably shall more love a Pagan ; and a Mahometan a Mahometan, then one of another Religion, for bare conformity of manners and opinions, makes that effect: Nevertheless it is certain that true Piety in this very instance hath something more peculiar whereby it may be known. It loves all Men in general, because the Image of God is in them, which principally makes them amiable : 2. The more it sees of that Image, and resemblance in them, the more it loves such persons. One mark of a Religious Man, is to love Religious persons, to seek out an acquaintance, and have a familiarity with them, and to be ready to serve them. 3. True Piety to speak fully, hates no person.

A Religious Man may be subject to present resentments, and sudden anger and transports, but they will not last long: for Charity will return and conquer those frailties, and therefore it is the worst sign, that we can discover in a Man, to see him have a Soul that continues long in an implacable hatred and resentment; and on the contrary one of the certainest and best signs, is to be inclinable to pardon, and ready to forgive. But this <sup>facility in pardoning</sup> ~~readiness~~ must not proceed from stupidity, nor lightness of Spirit, it ought to be accompanied with a just sense of the injury we have received; and proceed from a desire to do our duty, and from an imitation of God, who daily pardons us infinite sins.

A fourth vertue about which it is good to examine ones self, is prayer. Not but that false  
and

and unsincere Christians may pray to God, and they may pray sometimes with more ardour and transport, then those that are truly pious; But commonly their prayers are for Temporal interests: They are not much fixed upon the three first Petitions of the Lord's-Prayer, *Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* Neither have they any great zeal in begging of God the grace of his holy Spirit; nor ever feel that secret joy, which springs from their approaches unto God; nor that sweet confidence which <sup>others</sup> we have in his goodness. It is otherwise with a Man that is truly holy; In his prayers he will never omit recommending his Temporal condition to God, yet with an entire submission to the order of his providence : But principally he will be sure to ask

of

of him those things which his Piety makes him wish for, *viz.* The glory of God and his own. Sanctification. His prayer afterwards is usually ended with an holy joy, and an absolute confidence of the goodness of God, as we see in many of the Psalms; where after having begun with sad complaints, and languishing expressions, they end with admirable assurances, and perfect re-establishments of joy, as you may see in the 6, 13, 22, 31, and 42 Psalms.

I conclude this Chapter then, saying, That if you would have the profit I designed it for, you must not be content with the bare reading it over, but you must meditate <sup>on</sup> all the parts of it, well comprehending its sense and substance, penetrating all the principles therein. But above all it is necessary to make Application there-



thereof, <sup>by</sup> ~~which~~ reducing it into practice to your self, by examining with all exactness every point of it; according to all the extent of the direction which I have set down. I confess that to acquit ones self, there will be more time required, then that which is allowed to the more common acts of Devotion ; for this cannot be reduced into the work of a day, or two: But if we lay the work of our Salvation, very seriously to our hearts, we shall not repine at those moments we employ in the assuring our selves thereof, and if we are not absolutely stupid, or brutal, we shall be heartily glad to understand our selves well, upon a subject that is of greater importance then this life.

## CHAP. V.

*The fourth Rule. To consider ones  
self in the different Conditions  
that one happens to be in.*

**O**NE of the Principal parts of  
this Examination, is to en-  
deavour the knowing of our selves,  
in the different states and con-  
ditions of our life; in our afflicti-  
ons, prosperities, poverties, abun-  
dance, abasements, elevations,  
sicknesses and health: For these  
states particularly, our heart dis-  
covers it self as it is.

A Worldly Man in his prospe-  
rity, whatever Moral or Civil  
Vertue he hath, or whatever dis-  
position towards Piety, can scarce  
forbear forgetting himself, and  
falling into a negligence of Re-  
ligion

ligion and Devotion; into Pride, into a trusting in his Riches, into Luxury, into despising of his Inferiours and Equals; In fine, into giving a free Career to all his passions. Self-love which then Reigns over him by the flattery of his good successes, and the high condition he is in, making the whole World favourable unto him, he abandons and gives himself up unto it without all limits or resistance. But a good Christian doth not so, for in the affluence of any Temporal prosperities, he lifts up his heart still towards God; and acknowledges him for the Author of them, humbling himself the more in his sight, for the higher favours he receives from his hand, by the true sense of his own unworthiness; he preserves in that estate the balance of justice and equity, not abusing the advantages that he hath, but making

making them subservient to the furthering of his sanctification. Temporal prosperity often spoils good Men, and casts them sometimes into a neglect of their Salvation, into ingratitude towards God, debaucheries, injustices; yet it is certain, that if they be truly good, they keep some measure in these excesses : Because if prosperity on the one side favour the reliques of natural corruption, grace on the other hand suffers not it self to be wholly lost, it opposeth the licentiousness of the flesh, and hinders them from being overflowed with it: And there is ever a tacit resistance, which one may perceive in the bottom of ones heart, though at the same time it remains in a manner subdued. They have also some intervals wherein the spirit returns to himself, and then they make reflexion upon the va-

nity of the things of this World and their own frailty; and from these reflexions ordinarily arise the motions of returning to God and Repentance.

It is very important then for a Man to examine himself well upon this account, and see how he hath governed himself in his greatest prosperities, how he hath received them, and what hath been his gratitude towards God; what fruit of sanctification he hath drawn from them, or what abuses he hath made of them; what combats he hath felt in his heart upon those abuses, what measure he hath kept in his exercises, and what reflexions afterwards he hath made upon himself, and what Repentance hath followed.

In the afflictions of the World an unregenerate Man usually loseth that little joy and confidence that

that he had in the grace of God, and easily perswades himself God loves him not, since he hath permitted those misfortunes which have happened to him. In this state he commonly acts according to his habitudes or his temper ; if that be fiery and impetuous, the affliction doth but provoke and enrage him against God, it exasperates him against Men, he murmurs against Providence, he hatches violent resentments, he meditates revenges. But if his humour be a little moderater, he turns to humane means, to seek some remedy for his evil, he applies to that only all the light of his prudence ; if he be fearful, and of a mean spirit, he runs into complaints and regrets, and seeks his consolation in Tears and Dolours. If he be endued with principles of Philosophy, he throws himself into a Savage

hardness, and endeavours to fashion himself into an indifference, and insensibility both of good and evil. If the principles of the Christian Religion have made any considerable impression upon him, he turns himself to Prayer. But it is barely upon the prospect of being delivered from his affliction, and not from any true grief that he hath for having offended God; and to have drawn those marks of disgrace upon himself, so far is he from acting with a stable resolution to correct himself for the time to come. But these are not Characters of true Piety: for a Regenerate person feeling in his afflictions the evil which presses him, looks upon it at first as a sign of the Divine Anger, which he hath drawn upon himself. Then reflecting upon his sins, and the abuses which he hath thrown upon the favours that



that he hath received from Heaven, he condemns himself and conceives so pungent a grief for comporting himself so ill, that he looks back with horror upon his Extravagancies, and the just wrath of God; and is so far from murmuring against his Providence, that he acknowledges and owns his righteous Power, Wisdom and Justice. He recalls into his memory all the graces he hath received, and all the consolations he hath felt in his Communion with God : All the motives he had to serve him, and to fear him, and these things create a sensible grief in him, that he hath so failed in his duty, and a sincere design to amend himself ; in fine, he returns to God with all humility, and though he looks upon him as in fury, yet he is perswaded of his love, and speaks unto him as *Job* did ;

Job 13. 15.

*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* He prays

to him, but the principal subject of his prayer is to obtain the remission of his sins, and sanctifying grace for the time to come. In regard of his present affliction he bears it constantly, and after having dried up the present Tears of Nature, he raises his courage, regains his spirit, and stops the course of his grief, not by a principle of I know not what Philosophick insensibility, which is only Brutality and Pride; but by that of a holy resignation to the Will of God, knowing that the affliction it self, when it shall be made a right use of, will turn to

Rom. 8.

his profit, *Since all things work together for good to them that love God.* He neglects not humane means when he sees them proper for his deliverance: but at the same time he makes

use

use of them, he continually implores the blessing of God upon them, and looks upon them as an order of Providence.

A wicked Man, one that is not really Regenerated, makes no scruple to use for his deliverance sinful and illegitimate means. But a good Man will reject them with indignation, remembering that his chief end is not to deliver himself from the affliction, but to appease God, and be restored into his favour. As to the second causes from whence the affliction proceeds, he looks not upon them with desires and designs of revenge; but he pardons them as he desires that God should pardon him, and fastens his eyes only upon his own faults, and upon the justice of the scourge from above, which are the principal and first causes of his affliction; he condemns the first, and adores the

last ; to thee, O Lord, belongs righteousness, to me shame and confusion of face.

If afflictions come for the profession of the Gospel, and Religion hath drawn some sufferings upon them from the Worldly party, a false Christian behaves himself in another manner then the faithful ; for he will endeavour presently to accommodate himself to the times, that he may cover himself in the storm. He will be always ready to submit, and to dissemble, and to swimme with the Stream ; and to this end to enlarge the bounds of his Conscience, he will condemn as rigid and scrupulous, those who in the matters of Conscience, and Piety, will not yield at all. When these compliances will not serve turn ; he will enrage himself against the persecution, he will call to his help, hatred, anger, passion, sediti-

sedition, and all that flesh and blood shall suggest to him, to resist evil with evil, and injury with injury. In fine, if all this be too little, and he cannot by these ways deliver himself from the affliction, he will grow weary, he will rebuke himself for suffering, he will begin to look upon the profession of the Gospel, as the most odious thing, which deprives him of his repose, of his goods, of his pleasures, which are his great interests; he will esteem it as a barr in his way, which stops his designs, and which crosses all his hopes, and then quickly follows his absolute and open desertion of Religion: For as we have already said, it is self-love, that is to say, an Earthly and Worldly love, which ever reigns in his heart, and which possesses the first place there.

E s

As

As to the true faithful Christian, his conduct is very different in these sad occasions. First he looks upon afflictions as the ordinary consequences of the true Religion, and instead of being scandalized he is the more confirmed. He lays up in his heart all that Jesus Christ and his Apostles have said upon this subject.

*Matth. 16. If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. If ye were of the World, the World would love his*

*John 15. own, but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, the World hateth you. Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake, but*

*Matth. 10. he that holdeth out to the end shall be saved. That through*

*Acts 14. many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. If we dye with Christ we shall*

shall also live with him, 2 Tim. 2.  
 if we suffer with him, we  
 shall also reign with him. All

those who will live godly 2 Tim 3.  
 in Christ Jesus, must suf-  
 fer persecution. The Lord chasten-  
 eth every one whom he loves; and  
 scourgeth every Son whom

he receiveth. Heb. 12.  
 If ye en-  
 dure chastisement, God dealeth with  
 you as with Children; for what Son  
 is he whom the Father chastiseth  
 not. Beloved think it not strange  
 concerning the fiery tryal

1 Pet. 4.  
 which is, to try you, as  
 though some strange thing happen-  
 ed unto you, but rejoice in as much,  
 as ye are partakers of Christ's suf-  
 ferings.

Secondly, he represents to him-  
 self afflictions, in all their beauty  
 and worth, that he might not be  
 shaken; to wit, as they are a con-  
 formity to Jesus Christ; looking,  
 saith the Apostle, to Jesus the Au-  
 thor



thor and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the shame; as we have in them the honour of sustaining the cause of God, and of his Gospel. Unto

*Phil. 1.29.* you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to

believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. As they are steps which raise us to the Kingdom of Heaven. Our light afflictions which

*2 Cor. 4.* are but for a moment work out for us an exceeding

and Eternal weight of glory. As they are a means to make manifest the price and excellency of our faith, and our piety. That

the tryal of your faith being much more precious then of Gold which

*1 Pet. 1.7.* perisheth, though it be tryed with fire, might be

found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus

Christ. As they are occasions which

which God often takes wherein he glorifies his Wisdom, and his Power, in the preservation of his Church. *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt.* As they are usually accompanied with a new degree of grace, which God bestows upon his Children; *But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.* As they are necessary chastisements for our amendment. *Before I was afflicted I went wrong, but now I have kept thy word.* Thus the true Believer looking upon the sufferances of the Church with these prospects, in lieu of being troubled or

Isa. 43. 2.

1 Cor. 10.  
13.

or dejected, he draws from them matter of joy and glory, according to the sence of St. Paul, when he said, *But we glory in our*  
 Rom. 5. *tribulation.*

In the third place, he is incapable of making any breach in his Conscience, to deliver himself from it; though indeed he exposes not himself unto it; Or anticipates his Calamities by casting himself rashly into them, for that would be to tempt God. Nay he flies from them, and avoids them as much as he can lawfully; but would be very sorry to exempt himself from them by any wicked way, or to seek his rest by any relaxation of his Conscience, or any act of hypocrisie; knowing that an upright heart, and tongue, and works, are the most agreeable things in the World to God. And that he that would have us as wise as Serpents,

pents, will also have us as innocent as Doves. Knowing moreover that such kind of byassings are not only contrary to Christian simplicity, which never permits us to do the least violence to our Conscience, under any pretence whatever, but they are also very contrary to true prudence: For besides their drawing us from under the conduct of God's blessing, they make us fall into reproachful baseness, which gives the World opportunity to press things further, in hopes of succeeding; so that the surest way to be ever wise as Serpents, is to be innocent as Doves.

Fourthly, They fall not into that other inconvenience, which is so ordinary to unbelievers, who take sanctuary in Furies, in Seditions, in Cruelties and in Criminal Violences, to repell their Persecution. Yet he will not neglect

lect an apology for his Cause, for that is natural, just, and allowable. But he will practise no unjust and culpable ways, though he should find them never so facile: For he remembers the example of Christ Jesus his Saviour, *who when he was reviled reviled not again, and when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth Righteously.*

In fine, if the affliction lasts long, he bears it patiently, without emancipating himself; but encourages his Piety, to stop the Current of his natural Tears, and Complaints; but however he is far from conceiving the least rebate, or aversion to the Religion which draws these sufferings upon him: And with St. Paul says, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present World*

Rom. 8.

*are not worthy to be compared*

*pared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Remembring<sup>also</sup> that St. John writes, And to him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of Paradise.*

I confess it may happen that a good Man may sometimes be surprised, and overwhelmed, as it were, with the first motions of fear, or hope, or some other illusions, which may present Extraordinary and unforeseen Objects unto him, as once St. Peter was; but such funestous accidents have always three Characters; one, that the heart resists them, and inwardly Combats what the mouth utters, they are those kind of acts which are called acts of constraint; not but that they are in some respects indeed voluntary, but they are voluntary in respect of the weakness of the Will, which is not strong enough to support it

her selfe,

it self, and so is led away with its faintness, so that he doth the ill which he would not, and abhors it when he commits it. The other Character is, that these failures continue not long in them, for as soon as the heart recollects she gets up again by a sincere Repentance. And turning her Eyes upon Jesus Christ, they meet with his, which pierce the Soul. What hast thou done, say those terrible looks, what hast thou done weak and ungrateful servant. Thou hast abandoned thy Conscience, and betrayed the rich Treasure of my Truth, Thou hast injured my Grace, and art become unworthy of my Salvation. Give me an account of the sprinkling of my Blood, and grieving of the Spirit of Sanctification, which I had honoured thee with. Then in an instant all objects that were before him are changed, and the light



light becomes darkness unto him, and the dumbest and dearest Creatures have mouths opened against him, to reproach his Crimes: And thence comes sighs, and the bitterest Cries from his Soul. My God, says he, my Saviour have mercy upon me, correct me not in thy anger, neither chastise me in thy fury: And so his contrite Repentance never ceases, till it hath absolutely repaired his Evil. To this may be added a third Character, which is, That these sad accidents cannot, at the most, happen above once to a true Believer; for the horror of such enormous faults cannot easily be blotted out of the memory, and as I have said before, his Piety fortifies it self in its weakest places, and in those parts where it hath been liable to fail, and so is out of an estate of being again surprized.

## CH A P. VI.

*Fifth Rule. To consider ones self  
in the resistance that he hath  
made, in some strong Temptation.*

**T**Here are but very few persons that make profession of Piety, if they be endued with any qualities that gives them any consideration in the World, but they have light upon some dangerous accidents, wherein their Vertue and Faith have not been put to a proof; though by the Grace of God, they have not sunk under it. And I would wish them to lay hold of such an opportunity, to understand themselves well in; and for that purpose let them make an exact reflexion, how they untangled and freed themselves from

from such snares: For it will greatly contribute to the intended Examination.

If then they have been placed sometimes in great and strong Temptations of the World ; as for Example, if persons of high Power and Authority , persons amiable and dear, have imploy'd all the sweetnesse of their friendship, and all other motives that are used upon such occasions, to incline us to a change of Religion, or ingage us into some wicked intrigue : in a word, to tempt us to make a Shipwrack of our Vertue, and probity, by all manner of means ; if ~~one~~<sup>we</sup> have been firm and unmoveable in such an instance, 'tis a very good sign of the sincerity of our Regeneration. For neither the strength of our Temper, nor single Moral or Civil Vertue, nor the bare dispositions towards Piety, are not capable

pable of resisting a great interest of establishing a Family, or a splendid Elevation, or the alluring Charms of tender friendship, and a powerful perswasion.

But you must not stop here, for it may happen sometimes that a Man may defend himself from these temptations, either out of humour without being able to give a good reason; or some sentiment of vain-glory, whereby he thinks some honour, and merit redounds to himself, or by some helps of Birth and Education, or some considerations of esteem and friendship, which they may have for others: though I confess this happens very rarely, or never, to persons that have any little degree of reason. Can a Soul possess with self-love, in whom the Ideas of the World rule, be capable of standing firm, against a great hope, that is certain, and present, which

which operates with all those things which have the ascendancy over the Spirit, and all the allurements that can engage the heart. Can it, I say, resist them with a bare obstinacy, or a feigned joy of Contradiction, or the slender bands of good Birth, or Education, which lose most of their strength as soon as one gets out of ones Childhood, or by considerations of esteem, and humane friendship, which are seldom very efficacious? 'Tis much more to be presumed, and more just to believe, that the Idea of God only is capable, of triumphing over these objects. Nevertheless I will suppose that it is possible, and wish that every one would examine themselves upon this supposition: That they would recollect their memories, what they have felt upon such grand Occurrences, and if they find they have

have been victorious by the solidity of Vertue, and by the fear of God, when they have had promises of advancement in their largest extent, when there hath been no doubt, nor revocation of them, nay when there hath not been an insensibility of the obliging Charms which they have been graced with, and yet if they

*charms* have been Conquered, by placing the greatest interest upon Piety, and setting that in Opposition against all Temporal interest, and that the suavities of the grace of God hath swallowed up all humane blandishments; then you need not be dubious, you may be satisfied of your heart, and be assured that it is the product of a true regeneration: It is not an effect of flesh and blood, 'tis the effect of the Spirit, and an assistance received from above. I shall only add that if the Temptation

tion hath not been momentary, but of a long continuance, and that with the address, and strength there hath also been added much Assiduity; the judgment that is made of such a victory, is certain and demonstrative.

These kind<sup>of</sup> proofs are excellent touch-stones, wherewith we may attain to the knowledge of <sup>our</sup> ~~them~~ selves; and when a pious Man hath had the experience of them he ought to bless God, and acknowledge his goodness that hath allowed him so blest an opportunity, to shew his duty towards him, and to assure himself of his Salvation; and again to bless him for upholding him in so great a Combat. He must also adore the ways of his Wisdom and Divine Providence in regard of his Children, that employs such Master-pieces of his Power, to Seal more firmly upon their Souls the

F

truth



truth of their Election. Men have their ends, but God in the very permitting them to act Conformably to their own intentions, makes use of their Ministry to bring to pass the very contrary of that which they thought and designed; how happy is a righteous Man, when God is pleased in this manner to deal with him!

Notwithstanding he must take great care not to abuse such reflexions, for if under the pretence that a Man is happy when he hath undergone such tryals, he should imagine that he ought to seek for them, and to that purpose should expose himself voluntarily unto them, it would be the highest temerity, and a Crime that would not go unpunished. One cannot too much distrust ones own weakness, and without an extraordinary Revelation, none

none can promise themselves Gods assistance at the moment of danger; much less that he will help him, when he runs into it, instead of avoiding it. If it were only to humble and chastise us, for our so great presumption, it may be that God will purposely deliver us up to our own infirmity; and it is more likely that he will deal so with us, rather than sustain us, when we are so audacious, as to go brave our perils and dangers. We must then endeavour to avoid such kind of temptations, fly from all things that may lead us into them, and rather lean towards the ballast of fear, then audacity. But when ever it pleases God to call us unto them by the inevitable course of his Providence, 'tis then that we are obliged to muster up all our Courage, and then we may rely upon the assistance and help of the Holy Spirit.

## C H A P. VII.

*The seventh Rule. To Examine the progress one hath made, and to compare ones Piety with Superstitions.*

**T**O forget nothing which is necessary in this Examination, one must consider ones self, in my opinion, in all the several Ages of our lives, to see the progresses we have made in Holiness, and Christian piety. For if we find that we have been formerly subject to such or such Vices, and such or such Failings; and that we have corrected the Consequences of them by the care we have applied, or by the fear of God, and Religious principles, 'tis a good sign. All Piety hath its weak-

weaknesses, and imperfections; but they resemble those of Child-  
 hood which are bettered every day, and not like those of Age which grow on to a custom. An unregenerate Man is like a Setting Sun, whose light and lustre diminishes by little and little, and suddenly sets into night, and darkness; or a sick person who dies by Inches, and insensibly draws near to his Sepulchre. But a true Christian, quite otherwise, is like the Rising Sun, who ascends, and gains strength as he mounts higher and higher; he is a sick person indeed, but in his recovery; who though yet weak gathers strength every day, and gains something upon his Disease, being advancing by degrees towards his Health and Recovery: from Glory to Glory, saith *St. Paul*, and from Faith to Faith; which expression, notes the inseparable

increase of true Regeneration.

If then in our Examination of our selves, we can but find out this Character; let us rejoice in the grace of God; for it is one of the happiest Indications we can wish. But if on the contrary we make no progress, but go back instead of advancing, and return daily to the World from which the Divine Vocation ought to separate us; 'tis a sad and funestous sign: And therefore the Apostle scarce speaks in all his Epistles of any thing, but of encreasing and going forwards. *Be ye filled,* saith he, *with the knowledge of the Will of God, in all Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.* And in another place, he says, *From whom the whole*

whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted Ephes. 4.  
 by that which every joynt supplieth,  
 according to the effectual working  
 in the measure of every part, ma-  
 keth increase of the body, unto the  
 edifying of it self in love. And  
 in his Epistle to the Philippians  
 he proposes himself as an Exam-  
 ple on this point, *Forgetting*, saith  
 he, *those things which are behind,*  
*and reaching forth unto* Philip. 3.  
*those things which are be-*  
*fore: I press towards the mark, for*  
*the prize of the high Calling of God*  
*in Christ Jesus.*

But above all that we have said  
 hitherto, it is most important to  
 compare true Piety with supersti-  
 tious Piety, that we might make  
 a judgment from thence. For if  
 we cast our eyes upon false Religi-  
 ons, at the first sight they look  
 as if they made as great impres-  
 sions upon the hearts of their Vo-  
 taries,

taries, as true Religion can make upon the hearts of the faithful; one sees in both a like good intention, an equal zeal, and a readiness for all which they esteem to be for the glory of God. Each of them serve him in their own way, according to the Idea they have formed of him, and endeavour by the fear of him, to live without reproach amongst Men. 'tis therefore very necessary to distinguish this, for our better Consolation, and the better to establish our Piety in all regards.

First then, That which a Superstitious Person calls Piety and Devotion, consists for the most part in vicious actions, which cannot be agreeable to God; and a deluded Conscience often performs them. Their good intention is abused, their zeal is without knowledge, and their Prayers  
are



are injurious to God ; nay their very promptitude to serve him, is but a readiness to dishonour him in effect : For what honour, I beseech you, can we do to God, when we imagine Childish actions are delightful unto him, as all Superstitious actions are, which a Worldly wise man himself can make no account of ? What honour can accrue to him in fancying, as a Superstitious Man doth, that one sins and offends the Divine Majesty of God, by indifferent actions, which have nothing in themselves that is vicious, or irregular; and nevertheless they make them matters of Conscience ? What honour can redound to him in giving him that Worship, which corrupts that Spiritual, Immaterial, and infinite Idea which we ought to have of him, according to the verity of his Nature ? What honour is it to

him, to use those acts of Religion which suppose in a Creature a participation of that Infinity, which is so very peculiar to God that it cannot be Communicated to any other but himself? What honour is it to him to imagine to appease his wrath, or expiate sins by actions which have no proportion, either with our Offences or his Justice? What honour can it be to him when, instead of that Worship which Christ Jesus calls worshipping him in Spirit, and in Truth, which is indeed only worthy of God; we use only a Worship of Pomp and Worldly Magnificence, which consists in Exterior things, and wholly inveigles the Sences? What honour can be done to him when we make part of his Worship and our Devotions to redound upon dead and inanimate Creatures, which we make, as it were, inter-

interposers between him and us? What honour do we do him, when we establish his service, not singly in those things he hath commanded us, but in voluntary Devotions, which are the inventions of Men, and have no other recommendation but humane Authority? 'Tis then certain, That any Man who reflects upon these things, and finds his Piety and Devotion of another Classis and Order, disingaged, free and purified from this dross, which is not Evangelical; hath great cause of joy, and reason to bless God, for having shewed him a better way.

'Tis fit nevertheless to make two observations here, the one of which is, That although we profess a Religion whose Worship is pure, yet let us watch least we fall into Superstition, when we figure to our selves, that it is  
suf-

sufficient to practise exterior actions, to acquit our selves of the duties of Religion, as goings into publick Congregations, attentively hearing of the Word of God, and being regularly present at Prayers, and other things of that nature ; I say, we must not fancy these acts to be the chief, and principal actions of Devotion : For it would be changing of good into evil, for these acts though good in their bare use, which is to be signs and exercises of the inward Devotion of the Soul, and means of confirming or advancing us in Piety, become absolutely Superstitious, when we make them the Totals, or Capitals of Piety, because the truth of God and his Essence, consists in an interiour Worship.

The second observation is to be concerning another abuse, that we may fall into that is not less

pernicious, *viz.* To imagine that all these acts of outward Devotion are not necessary in the service of God, that we may neglect them without troubling our Conscience; under the pretence that they are not the principal, and may be abused and turned into Superstition: For indeed though they be not essentials of true Piety and Holiness, yet nevertheless they are indispensably necessary from the reasons I mentioned before; which ~~is~~<sup>are</sup> that they are signs and exercises of our Piety and Devotion, and good means of confirming us. Therefore a true Regenerate Man equally avoids both these Rocks; his inward Soul is Consecrated unto God, but nevertheless he neglects not outward Worship and Devotion.

In the second place, I say that the Devotion of a superstitious person

Person differs from a righteous Mans in the impressions which they both make in the heart, and in the effects likewise which they produce from it. As for Example, you must not imagine that the perswasion that we have of errour, is equal to that we have of truth. I know that St. Paul says, *That God for this cause shall*  
 2 Theſ. 2. *send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lye, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth.* But that designs not a parity of Efficacy ; for a deceived Spirit is like a Man asleep, who raves after the Images of his dreams, who is not sensible of the falseness of them, yet nevertheless cannot have the confidence of them, as a man fully awake hath in those objects he sees or feels. 'Tis ignorance, pre-occupation, and confusion, that produces a false perswasion,

swasion; but light and distinction brings forth a true sentiment.

I say also the same of Confidence and Trust, that which a sincere Piety gives, hath another manner of force then that which comes from Superstition; for the first is an inward voice from God, which makes it self known to the Conscience of Man, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost; but the second is only an imagination that hath no solidity, for it is an amusing of the Conscience, which charms, as one may say, its inquietudes for some time, and diverts its troubles; but the first is a true Tranquillity, a Peace which removes all occasions of fear, and substitutes in their place, causes of Joy and Consolation. This is a Peace which ariseth from the experience of consideration, and which bears up it self on all occasions when it ought to display  
its



its vertue ; whereas the other will certainly sink down, if it be put to the tryal ; that is to say, if we search carefully into the grounds and principles, that it hath to defend it self against terrible objects. A false Confidence vanishes and forsakes a Man in great afflictions, in the approaches of Death and Judgment ; whereas a true one endures at those times, and Triumphs.

Concerning the love of God, if we may say Superstition inspires any sentiments of it, we must not doubt but they are very different from those of a true Christian. For this love is wholly in the superiour part of the Soul, wholly in the new Man, wholly purified from earthly things, wholly disengaged from the Senses. But that of a superstitious Man hath its principal seat in the passions ; it is rather  
Carnal

Carnal then Spiritual, and hath more of Sence then Religion. From whence it comes to pass that this last is ordinarily indiscreet and imperious, like to the flame of a Feavour, or the violence of a Torrent ; whereas the true one is more calm, like to natural heat, or to a River which runs softly. That of the superstitious Man is absolutely of the same nature with its principle ; such as is the Idea which he hath of God, such is the love which ariseth from it. Again as we have said, the perswasion that we have of Errour is very much weaker then that which we have of truth, so we must acknowledge that this love which Errour produceth, never possesseth the heart with that force, nor is so firmly rooted as a sincere and true one ; this last penetrates and reigns there, the other, if I dare  
so

so express my self, possesses only the superficies, whilst self-love always keeps the first rank, and dwells in the bottom.

This is then beyond all these differences, and in general beyond all the Characters that I have given hitherto, which I desire that a Man examine himself by, if he would know himself well, and be assured of the truth of his Regeneration; not that I pretend that all the World is capable of following exactly these Rules after one another, nor of examining themselves punctually by them; for this requires knowledge and experience; and how many are there which have but little of either, and yet in their simplicity, they continue to live in the fear of God, to feel a sense of him in their Souls. But if they are not altogether proper for the less, <sup>knowing</sup> yet they may serve however those who

who have some rise and advancement in knowledge; and if they will but be attentive, I hope there will be but few persons, who will not reap some fruit from them.

---

## CH A P. VIII.

*The Eighth Rule. To Examine  
ones present State.*

**A**fter having examined that great question, whether we are or are not true Christians, whether we have or have not a true Communion with Jesus Christ, we must go on further; and before we undertake to draw near to the Holy Table, when we shall have supposed that we are truly regenerated, we must know also what is the present estate

state of our Souls. For a true Christian may be in two different states, in an estate of Righteousness, or in an estate of Sin ; in an estate of Peace with God, rejoicing without any obstructions in the sentiments of his love, and of his favour ; or in an estate of disgrace and trouble with God, cast away from his presence, and deprived of the marks of his good will and favour. *David* before his Crime of Adultery with *Bathsheba*, and his Murdering *Uriah*, was in the first state; and in the second, after he was fallen into those enormous sins. *St. Peter* was in the first when Christ admitted him to the Holy Supper, which he celebrated at the Passover with his Disciples; and fell into the second a few hours after, when he denied his Master in the Palace of the High Priest. 'Tis then very necessary before we come

come to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that we Examine our selves again about this Article. For 'tis certain that we very often fall into faults, which are more or less considerable, which loosens the state of our Righteousness, and draws upon us the wrath of God ; and the worst of all is that we fall asleep as it were in it, either from our hearts loving to deceive it self therein, or some other ill principle. However it comes, we often take no heed that we are fallen into Crimes : Or if we do take notice of it, we diminish the Idea of them, and are but a little troubled. And if we come in that state to the Communion, we must not doubt but we receive it unworthily, and draw down punishments instead of Divine Benedictions upon our selves.

But

But you will say, what then, is there any state of a true Christian whilst he is in this World, that may be called a state of righteousness? Is it possible that we may be sometimes free from sin? Is it not the perpetual condition of the just Man to fall seven times a day? And doth not St. John say, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves,*  
 1 John 1. *and the truth is not in us?*

It seems then we cannot make this distinction of two states of a Christian, one of righteousness, and the other of sin, since indeed we are ever in sin, and have ever need to say what Jesus Christ hath put in our Mouths, *Forgive us our trespasses.*

I answer, that it is true, we can never have a full and perfect righteousness whilst we are in this World, and this is that which we have supposed from the beginning



ning of this Treatise. It is not that which we understand by this state of Righteousness, which we speak. There are two sorts of sins, some which are much more light, and others which are more enormous; some which much less offend the true form of Regeneration, and Combat it more at a distance, others which are much more contrary, and more directly opposite to it; some for which the Conscience hath more horror, and others for which it hath less. For Example, we will conclude, that an idle word, or a lye about indifferent things, an excess of divertisment, an indiscretion, are things which much less oppose true Piety and Justice; then the committing of a Murder, or Perjury, or Calumny, or a violent transport of Passion, or Infidelity. When then a Man finds himself not guilty of any of these

these sort of Crimes, we call that a state of Righteousness, not that to speak properly, it hath no sins; but because a Man finds himself not charged with any of those great faults, which deprive him of the actual sense of God's love, and put him under his fatherly anger.

To Examine a Man's self well upon this point, we must not insist simply upon notorious crimes, which humane Laws themselves punish, as if he ought to believe himself righteous, when he shall find himself neither guilty of Murder, nor Adultery, nor Robbery: He must go further and make reflexions upon the thoughts of his heart, upon the words of his mouth, and the acts of his hands, upon his designs, and his desires, to see if he hath not committed some injustice against his Neighbour, or some impiety against

gainst God himself; and in a word, if he have not dishonoured the Christian Profession by some unworthy thing. This is that which a good Man ought to do every day, but he ought particularly to do when God calls him to the Communion of the Lord's Supper ; since it is upon these holy occasions that we renew our Covenant with God, and if we desire to do it faithfully, we must follow this order.

We should first take the Law of God, and stay upon all the particulars one after another, and consider every one of them in all their extent, and in their divers degrees, and should remember that which is commonly spoken for a general explication of this Law ; to wit, That it commands not only our outward actions as humane Laws do, but also reacheth to the inward motions of the

G                      Soul,

Soul, and the Conscience, which are all known to God; that under the negative commands the affirmative are comprized, and under the affirmative the negative; that is to say, when it forbids us to do any evil, it enjoins us at the same time to do the contrary good, and when it commands us to do any good, it forbids us also to do the evil which is opposite to it : that when it remarks any genus of good or evil, it tacitly remarks also all the species of it, that is to say for Example; when it forbids us stealing in general, it forbids all the different manners of seizing upon other Mens Goods : That when it expresses it self in one species, it understands all others of the same order; <sup>viz.</sup> when it forbids false witness, it forbids also all other ways by which we may unjustly blacken the reputation of our Neigh-

Neighbour. That when it forbids any evil or commands any good, it forbids or commands all that which may naturally carry us to it, as when it forbids stealing, it forbids luxury and excessive expences because they naturally lead to it. In fine, when it forbids or commands any thing, it forbids or commands all the degrees of it: As when it forbids murder, it forbids hatred, desire of revenge, quarrels, and outrages, which are as degrees of Murther. Thus in applying to our selves this Law part after part, we may know wherein we have violated it, and wherein we have observed.

2. It will be good also in this Examination to insist not only upon sins of commission, but also upon sins of omission ; that a Man recall before his eyes, the divers occasions which are pre-

sented to him, wherein he was obliged to do good, to see in what manner he received them, and how he hath acquitted them; and if he hath not let many pass without hearkening to either his Vocation, or his Duty, or the motions of his Conscience. It so much the more concerns us to enter into these considerations, as it is very easie and very ordinary for us to be negligent in it. Most times we believe our selves to be in a very good estate, when we perceive not our selves guilty of any of those great sins, which make a quick impression upon our spirit. But as for sins of omission we have little trouble about them: For such is the nature of our hearts, that we are very much affected with what we do, but little with that which we do not. Yet it is certain that the sins of omission are not little, and that there

there is but little difference between a Man who kills his Neighbour, and he who by his fault lets him miserably perish, when he is by his Vocation to succour and save him.

3. A good Man must consider himself also in all the relations which he hath with the Civil Society, with the Church, with his Family, with his Profession, according to the rank and degree which he is in. By this means he will easily discover the faults which he hath committed against his duty, and the negligences into which he might be fallen. In general we ought in the quality of Men, to live soberly, righteously, and godly. But there are particular duties to which we are obliged by these relations; a Father owes a duty to his Children, and a Child to his Father; a Magistrate to the People, and the



People to their Magistrate; the Minister to his Flock, and the Flock to their Minister, we owe a duty one to another. It concerns every one then, to see in what manner he hath governed himself towards his Superiours, Inferiours, and Equals. If fierceness or hardness of heart, or passion, or prejudice, or interest, or humane considerations, have not made him commit injustices against his inferiours. If Envy, Rebellion, the spirit of Liberty, inclination to censure and detractions, have not made him do things contrary to the respect which he owes to his Superiours. If Ambition, Pride, Jealousie, or Anger, have not made him sin against the Law of Charity and Equity which he owes to his Equals.

4. Every one of us in particular must enter into his own Conscience

science, to see there in what manner we have answered the favours that God hath done us. And here we ought to set before our Eyes all these mercies, and consider how great the Divine goodness hath been towards us, how it hath not ceased for so long a time to add blessing to blessing; in examining the number, the greatness, the value, we ought to consider all the circumstances which raise them: After this it will be easie to judge if we are not fallen into a black ingratitude, and if we have not given him cause to complain of us, as he did once of his Vineyard, of which he had taken all possible care, and yet it brought forth nothing but wild Grapes.

But it is not only necessary that we examine our selves about our enormous faults, whether of commission or omission, against God

or against Men; but we must also cast our eyes upon our lesser sins. For though a Man find himself exempt from the first, yet if he be loaden with a great number of those of the second order, we cannot say that he is in a state of Righteousness; <sup>for</sup> as by the concurrence of many little Distempers, a considerable Disease ariseth which puts the life in danger, so many light offences of divers kinds, make an assembly or body of iniquity, which cannot but bring the just wrath of God upon a Man, and interrupt the course of his Justification; and because these light offences escape the memory, we have the more need after the strictest Examination that we can make, to imitate David, saying with him; *Who can understand his Errours?* Psal. 19. *Lord cleanse me from my secret faults.*

## C H A P. IX.

*The Use of this Examination.*

**T**He Conclusion of this Examination, after we have done it exactly, is the most important of all : For all that we should have performed hitherto, would be very Vain, if we do not reduce all the knowledge we have gained upon our selves to some good use. But what is this use? That in my opinion no person can be ignorant of. For it is a deep humiliation of our selves in the presence of God, a condemning of our selves before his face, a vigorous and bitter grief for having offended him, a holy and ardent recourse to his Mercies, by the satisfaction and intercession of  
Jesus

Jesus Christ. For after we have made this just and necessary scrutiny into our lives : Alas ! we shall find too many causes of Repentance, and <sup>or</sup> esteeming our selves as nothing in his sight; for what Man is there that ought not to say with the Prophet? *Enter not into Judgment with thy*  
 Psal. 143. *Servant, for in thy sight shall no Man living be justified. If*  
 Psal. 130. *thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who may abide it ?* Our sins shall arise on all sides, and present themselves before us, they will shew their Number, and their Horrour; and placing them with that Righteousness and perfect Holiness, which the Calling and Gospel of Jesus Christ requires of us, 'tis not possible but our Souls should be much moved and terrified thereby. Yet let us not turn away our eyes, as we  
 are

are used to do from disagreeable sights ; but contrarywise let us fix them well in our sight and Meditations, and draw from them all that it is possible to affrighten and confound us. A verbal Confession, an exterior humility, a volatile grief, and a momentary Contrition are not sufficient: There must be an entire, and a sincere Repentance, which wholly takes up the heart; and penetrates the Conscience, if we would have it delightful to God.

After these motions, a hearty and ardent recourse to the Divine Mercies must succeed, by the ineffable price of the blood of our Redeemer; and to this effect, remember the gracious words that God speaks by his Prophet unto us, saying; *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way, and live*

Ezek. 33.

*live. Yea, Like as a Father piti-*  
*eth his Children, so is the*

*Pfal. 103. Lord merciful unto them*  
*that fear him : Look how wide al-*  
*so the East is from the West, so far*  
*hath he set our sins from us. The*  
*Lord is full of compassion and mercy,*  
*long suffering and of great goodness.*

*Isaiah 1. Though your sins be as*  
*Scarlet, they shall be as*  
*white as Snow. And if any Man*

*1 John 2. sin, we have an Advocate*  
*with the Father, Jesus*  
*Christ the Righteous ; and he is the*  
*propitiation for our sins. He is*

*Heb. 7. able to save them to the*  
*uttermost, that come un-*  
*to God by him. Let us therefore*  
*come boldly unto the*

*Heb. 4. Throne of Grace, that we*  
*may obtain mercy, and find grace to*  
*help in time of need. But one of*  
*the principal effects which our*  
*Examination ought to produce,*  
*and without which all the rest*  
*would*



would be unprofitable, is to take measures and precautions to correct our selves, and advance our Sanctification. For true Repentance hath two Considerations, one upon things past, the other upon things to come; therefore Jesus Christ who hath joined them together in the Prayer he taught his Disciples, says of the one side, *Forgive us our sins*; and of the other, *Lead us not into temptation*. Upon this last some precepts may be given, which if well performed will be of great use.

The first is to apply our spirits as much as it is possible to meditate upon the mysteries of Religion. By which means Religion will become familiar unto us, and by the blessing of God, sweeten and temper our heart and spirit. These Mysteries are so amiable that they cannot be often looked into by an eye illuminated with  
Grace

Grace, without learning to esteem and love them! These precepts are so right and strait, that if we often set them before us, they will insensibly rectifie our Souls! 'Tis a strange thing to see how the greatest part of Men are negligent upon this point. There is an infinity of persons, who desire their Salvation, and live likewise in a Sage and Regular way, and have but small things to do, and nevertheless pass their days away in frivolous employments, and studies of no weight, instead of employing themselves to the study of Religion, where they would find pleasure and profit united: if they but know in general the principal points of the Christian Faith, and read a Chapter or two in the Bible every day, by form and custom without any reflexion, these sort of people think they have done enough. Never ta-  
king

king notice of what they lose, for the knowledge of Salvation is a Source and Spring of infinite precious things ; which becomes more beautiful and more admirable, the further one proceeds in the quest of it. An ancient Philosopher going about to make some definition of the Divinity, said it was a Sphere whose Centre was every where, and Circumference no where. By which in my opinion he would describe the immensity of God. But I had rather say, his Circumference is every where, and his Centre no where; for we may enter into the Meditation of the Divine Mysteries in all places, but being once entered, we find no Centre where the Line finishes; and whereas all other Lines which have a Centre grow narrower, as they approach nearer to it, on the contrary, those of the meditation of God

God, seem always to enlarge themselves wider.

To this precept I will add a second, which is, that in the applying ones spirit to things of Religion, if you would have a notable profit from it, you must not be contented with an historique knowledge, nor propound to fill your head with heaps of curious Questions, to speak upon the instant, and dispute pertinently, but you must turn it to the practise part; *viz.* To consider them in the prospect of those motives which they will furnish us with towards our Piety and Righteousness, towards our Charity, and all the other Vertues. As for Example, instead of amusing ones self to charge ones memory with all that the School treats concerning the Providence of God, how he that is immoveable in himself can move all things; how Natu-

ral.

ral Causes, which neither have  
 Ears nor Reason, can obey the  
 Commands of the first Cause,  
 without any sort of impression,  
 or Physical Vertue ; how God  
 could permit sin to enter into the  
 World, which hath made such ha-  
 vock and destruction ; how he  
 could concur in the Criminal acti-  
 ons of any Creature, and not inte-  
 rest his Sanctity, and such like que-  
 stions : Instead, I say, of busying  
 ones self with these things, it  
 were better to contemplate his  
 Providence in the views of Pra-  
 ctice ; for by these you would  
 learn that God was the Master,  
 and most Sovereign disposer of all  
 events, that it is he which raises  
 and pulls down every degree as  
 he pleases ; that he is the Author  
 of life, and of death, of affliction,  
 and prosperity, of light and dark-  
 ness ; that out of the Treasury of  
 his Grace are issued forth all bles-  
 sings,

things, happy designs, favourable successes, unseen assistances, and deliverances in the time of need. And on the contrary, how out of the Store-houses of his Justice comes all disgraces and misfortunes; unhappy projects, funestous accidents, subversions of Kingdoms and Families; which will make us have an Idea of God, fit and worthy of his Divine Majesty. Thereby we shall learn to adore that full and ever vigilant care of his bounties, which thus displays it self for the preservation of all its Creatures, to the very nourishing the Birds of the Air, and cloathing the Lillies of the fields in their lustre and beauty, to the very feeding of the Swallows; by which we shall learn that in all needs and necessities, our prayers must be addressed to him, and to none besides him, since 'tis he alone who  
hath

hath the whole Government of the Universe in his hands, and imparts it to no person. We shall also learn to give him thanks for all the good we possess as coming from his liberality, and so to make use of them to his glory, and service, that we abuse them not to gratifie our passions; since it would be the greatest indignity we could throw upon him, to imploy his own favours that he bestows on us, to dishonour him, and fight against him. We shall also learn to bear our afflictions with patience, and resignation, since they come from the all-powerful hand of God, who hath an absolute right over us, and reigns over Heaven and Earth. We shall learn to acquiesce in our suffering them, because they are dispensed by an infinite Wisdom, who doth all things well. And we shall also learn to support them with hope



hope, and consolation, remember that God makes all things turn to the good and advantage of his Children. In fine, we shall learn not to form any unjust designs, and to place no Confidence in Temporal things; since God may take them from us when he pleases, and that from those very breasts from whence we pretended to derive our joy and glory, he can bring forth our ruine and disgrace.

Besides it will be good sometimes to gather up, as in one body, as many motives as we can out of the Christian Religion, which <sup>may</sup> lead us to the love of God, and to holiness; for by them a composed Idea will be framed, and a great Image, which will have much more force upon our Spirits, and a much greater impression on our Souls, than if we but consider every motive separately.

rately. For notwithstanding our regeneration, we must acknowledge that we are very hardly wrought to the heighth of Piety. As Physicians therefore when they meet with a body that is difficult to be purged, by prudence are led to use a stronger remedy, or give a greater quantity then at first; in like manner we that know our selves hard to be touched inwardly, and brought to performance of spiritual duties, are obliged not only to imploy the strongest motives which our Religion furnishes us with to that purpose, but to join them all together, that the strength of them united, may engage and gain us to that, which single acts of Piety cannot do by themselves.

One can scarce tell what benefit in order to this effect, the bare frequent Meditation of the vanity of all Temporal things is: For

as

as it is they which most commonly seduce and lead us to sin, so 'tis a very great advantage to our Sanctification, to turn our Spirits often to the Consideration of the little value they have in themselves, their fragility, and the weakneses which they fall into, who fix their hearts upon them. It is good to consider into how many impertinences and follies they throw Worldly people, how many useless steps, and how many intricate tasks they tye upon us, without ever compassing the end of their designs, and if they be attained, how suddenly, and grievously death comes, and defeats it all. 'Tis this great representation of death, and its necessity, that a regenerate Man ought often to set before his eyes; not in a Philosophical manner, barely looking upon it as the last Line of the duration

on of Men: For that view of death can produce but two sorts of effects in us, which is either debauched thoughts, to employ the rest of the time we have to live, in pleasure; *Let us eat and drink,* as the *Epicureans* say, *for to morrow we shall dye*: or thoughts of grief and despair, as it is an evil without remedy. But we must look on it in a Christian manner; viz. as accompanied and followed by the Judgment of God, who will in that moment, decide for or against us, an Eternity of Glory, or an Eternity of Misery and Damnation! We must frequently meditate upon the Eternal miseries in which the Wicked shall be plung'd, to keep our hearts and spirits in fear; for that is a bridle to our passions. We must also raise our thoughts often to the infinite blessings which God hath prepared for us, to the intent and  
end

end that what fear hath begun, hope may forward, and love may perfect; we ought also to take notice of what we are most inclined to, that we might precaution our selves against our infirmities. For 'tis true that if we do not thus arm our selves, we shall find that we are daily exposed to be surprized by our own weakneses, one to the Choler which his own temper drives him unto, another to an excess of facility and complaisance; some by the love of pleasures, and others to several things of the same nature: Therefore 'tis most necessary to make these kind of reflexions very often, that we might labour to Conquer our selves, which can hardly be done without some course of time.

The better to attain it, my opinion, is to remove from ones self as much as possibly we can,  
the

the objects and occasions which give way to our infirmities to start forth. We must do what 'tis said the *Parthians* do, fly away as we Combat, and distrust our selves. 'Tis in this sence that *St. Paul* bids us work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, not doubting whether God loves us, or whether his promises are true, but doubting whether he will not suffer us to yield under Temptation; for as I have said before, it often happens that he leaves us to our selves, when we are too proud and confident, that we might be humbled.

To this I shall add another Precept, which I believe to be of great use, which is to be very curious in the choice of those persons with whom we desire to make a particular friendship, and to converse with often. For we must not doubt but that we ea-

H

sily

sily receive a tincture from the ways, and the inclinations, and the manners of those we usually converse with; and therefore it imports us greatly to place our friendships well.

Not that I mean, that we ought absolutely<sup>r</sup> retire from the World, and fly from the Society of Men. For God, contrarywise, would have us live with them; and therefore the faithful are called by St. Paul, *Burning lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation*; that solitary, rigid, and wildish humour, which in the first Ages of the Church made many retire into Deserts, to fly from the Crowd, and avoid Commerce with worldlings, had a fair enough colour at the first, and I doubt not also there was a good intention therein. Notwithstanding God hath not accompanied it with his blessing; for from  
thence



thence we see many Superstitions have had birth, which have corrupted the Christian Purity. I believe then that a regenerate Man, may and ought to live in the World, remembring that he is a Man, that is, that he is made for Society, and not to go out of the World ; 'tis the order Providence hath placed us under, and the Law which by our birth is imposed upon us. But as general Society hinders us not from peculiar ties which we have to certain persons that we love more tenderly, and frequent most; I wish pious persons to be careful in making a good choice of their most valued friends, and familiars, because that will certainly contribute very much to the preservation, and to the increase of their Piety and Vertue.

One may here ask what Judgment and Use may be made of the

H 2

direct-

directors of Consciences.<sup>2</sup> To which I answer that they may be profitable, provided that they be used with these precautions. First, That the use of them be left to the liberty of every Man, for the Scripture not appointing it, it were to impose a Yoke to constrain any person thereto. 2. That they be not used but upon important accounts, and occasions that require consultation ; else it would occasion sloth, and one should be by that means accustomed not to consult our own selves and Brethren in what we ought to do, but remit it wholly to the advice of a director, which were ill; since none ought to be more concerned for our Salvation then our selves, nor can better be acquainted with our Consciences. 3. That we esteem not our selves servilely tyed to all that a director pleases  
to

to counsel or prescribe, but to reserve a choice of your own, and a distinction, which may preserve the right which every one hath of judging themselves, from the dictates of a director: Otherwise you would make your Conscience the slave of other men, and attribute an Authority unto them, which belongs only to God and his Son Jesus Christ. 4. To make a good choice when you will have recourse to a director, that you might not fall into ill hands, for there is but few persons endued with quality fit for that employment, and very few that abuse not such offices to the gaining a kind of Dominion over Souls, and power in Families. In a word, this practice is subject to inconveniences ; Therefore must be used with great wisdom and discretion. Nevertheless I confess that there are some occasions

wherein one may draw much aid, light, and consolation, from the direction of a holy Man, who is wise, and enlightned when one has recourse to such a one.

In fine, one of the best precepts one can give upon this subject is to pray unto God, ardently begging from him the conduct and assistance of the Holy Spirit: for without his grace and benediction, all Exterior means signifie nothing, since it is he that produces in us, both to will, and to do according to his good pleasure. But when I speak of Prayer, I mean not only that which is usual in Publick Assemblies and Families, where I suppose that every one does their duty; but I mean they should attend their private and particular prayers; in their Closets, in their Chambers, and in their Beds, where every one is more recollected: I mean those  
fre-

frequent Elevations of our hearts unto God, which may be done in our very business and Employments, and although they be short and momentary, yet need not be less Ardent, or less Efficacious. But in extraordinary Occasions, as Afflictions, or days of Preparation for the Holy Supper, you may add, if you can, private Fasting unto your Prayer, to be the better disposed in your Devotion. God grant that this small Treatise which I have Consecrated to the use of his Church, may also serve to the good and Edification of all faithful Souls, that they might gather that fruit from it which I have proposed to my self, to the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Amen.*



---

## A Prayer of Preparation for the Communion.

**M**Y God, my Saviour, and  
my Father, I prostrate  
my self at the Foot of thy Throne,  
to adore thy Majesty, and to ac-  
knowledge thy righteousness, I  
am in thy presence but Dust and  
Ashes, a Worm of the Earth,  
and most unworthy of thy turn-  
ing of thy Eyes towards me, or  
imploying the cares of thy Provi-  
dence towards my good. For what  
is mortal Man that thou shouldst  
re=

regard him, or the Son of Man  
 that thou shouldst visit him?  
 But moreover I am Criminal  
 Dust and Ashes, a sinful Crea-  
 ture which deserves thy severest  
 Judgments; and the more I con-  
 sider my self, the more I find my  
 self guilty of violating all thy  
 Commandments, ungrateful for  
 the many favours which I have  
 received from thy goodness, and  
 unfaithful to all the engagements  
 of my Vocation. Alas! Lord,  
 if thou shouldst take notice of  
 my iniquities, how could I sub-  
 sist in thy sight? I have stop't  
 my Ears a thousand times against  
 the exhortations of thy Word,  
 and have been deaf to thy threat-  
 nings, and scarce sensible of thy



Corrections : busied with the  
 vain and perishing things of this  
 World, I have suffered my self  
 often to be surprized in their  
 snares, neglecting the things of  
 my Salvation, and thy Kingdom.  
 How often have I preferred my  
 passions, and interests against  
 the rules of my duty, and thy  
 righteousness ? How many times  
 have I wandered from thy ways,  
 and thrown my self into the ways  
 of the World, where I should  
 have been lost, if thou hadst not  
 stretch't forth thy hand to have  
 rescued me ? Every moment of  
 my life might reproach me for  
 my weaknesses and my imperfe-  
 ctions, my Conscience accuses  
 me, and my sins are on every  
 side

side, cloathing me with Confusion, for thy Eyes are too pure to suffer sin, or to take delight in unrighteousness. I condemn myself therefore in thy presence, and confess that if thou wouldst deal with me in thy rigour, thou wouldst find in me too much reason to deliver me up to thy just Vengeance, and cause enough to withdraw from me all the precious signs of the Covenant, and of Adoption which thou hast given me, and so absolutely reject me from thy Communion. But thou art a gracious and compassionate God, and moved with the Bowels of a Father towards his Children. Those that thou dost once love, thou lovest to the end;  
thy

thy gifts, and Vocation are without Repentance, and thou hast promised that though our sins be red as Blood, thou wouldest make them as white as Snow. Have mercy on me then, for I fly to thy great mercies ; my God, pardon me my faults, and according to the greatness of thy Compassions blot out all my transgressions. I know thou requirest the Conversion of sinners that they might live, but I know also that though my Repentance be not such as it ought to be, yet thou dost not quench smoking Flax, nor break a bruised Reed. Thy dear Son died for me, and rose again for my Justification, and is ascended into Heaven,  
and

and there makes intercession for me ; listen to the voice of his Blood, pleading for me, and in respect of his sufferings, and merits, restore me thy joy and Salvation ; I acknowledge no other Saviour nor Mediator but him, nor place any confidence but in his Sacrifice, for he is the way, and the truth, and the life, and none can come unto thee but by him. Impute his dying obedience unto me, and cloath me with his perfect righteousness, that I may appear unreprouable in thy sight. And since thou now callest me to thy Divine Table ; grant me grace, O Lord, to receive worthily these Sacred Testimonies of my Salvation.

Loosen

Loosen my thoughts from Earthly things, and raise me to the Meditation of the great and Cœlestial objects which are represented to me in thy Sacrament. Increase in me the faith of these Mysteries, that with a heart truly purified I may receive the Body and Blood of thy Son, as the Victim which was once offered unto thee upon the Cross; and now represented unto me in this heavenly action. Let me receive them with a lively faith, and with a sincere acceptation, as thou art pleased to give them in sincere Love. Let me accompany this faith with a profound humility, and holy gratitude, that without any merits of  
our

our own ; nay when we were plunged into sin, and condemnation, thou didst draw out of thy Treasury this Eternal Manna, this Bread of Life : to Communicate thereby unto us, a hope of a most happy and heavenly Immortality, which thou hast prepared for us above in thy Celestial Mansions. These things my God, I beg of thee in the Name of thy Son, to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, one God blessed for ever, be given all Honour, and Power, and Glory, from Age to Age, Amen.

## A P R A Y E R after the Communion.

**M**Y God, my Saviour,  
and my Father, I yield  
thee the profoundest thanks of  
my heart, that thou hast with-  
out all considerations of the ma-  
ny faults which I have commit-  
ted against thee, which made me  
unworthy of thy bounties, resto-  
red me to thy favour, in giving  
me the assurances of thy love in  
the Communion of thy Son Jesus  
Christ. What shall I render un-  
to thee, for all thy benefits to-  
wards me? Suffer me not, O  
God,



God, to fall into ingratitude, after so many Testimonies of thy favour and good will which I have received from thee. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and let all which is within me bless his Holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits ; who pardons all thy iniquities, and heals thy infirmities. But what gratitude can I make thee, my God, but to Consecrate my self intirely to thy Service and Glory ? Let all the actions of my life be as a loud voice, crying I am Crucified with Jesus Christ, and the life which I live now, is not mine, but Jesus Christ liveth in me ; and I live in the faith of the Son of God,

God, who loveth me, and hath given himself for me. This is my desire, and this is my intention, but I can promise my self nothing of this ; but do thou make an end, Lord, of that which thou hast begun by thy Grace ; and suffer not thy own work to be imperfect. Let me end my days in thy fear ; let neither Death, nor Life, Angel, Principality nor Power, things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, ever be able to separate me from thy love.

Make me bear with Confidence, and with Courage all afflictions, which accompany the Profession of thy Truth ; and let me never fall under any Temptation.

tion. Let not the World seduce my heart at any time, either by its promises, or its threatnings, or illusions of what kind soever; but with steadiness, Let me ever walk in thy ways; going on towards the mark which thou hast proposed unto me, and <sup>which</sup> is the price of my Calling. And the God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make me perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in me that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

F I N I S.



Willie  
7777777777

Willie

A  
De  
Al  
ro  
Pr  
W

Q  
Co  
M  
th  
for  
th  
An  
C

m  
fic  
of  
Po  
th

th

**A** New History of *Ethiopia*,  
being a Full and Accurate  
Description of the Kingdom of  
*Abessinia*, Vulgarly, though Er-  
roneously called the Empire of  
*Prester John*. In Four Books.  
Wherein are contained,

I. An Account of the Nature,  
Quality and Condition of the  
Country, and Inhabitants; their  
Mountains, Metals and Minerals;  
their Rivers, (particularly of the  
source of the *Nile* and *Niger*;)   
their Birds, Beasts, amphibious  
Animals, (as the River-Horse and  
Crocodile;) Serpents, &c.

II. Their Political Govern-  
ment; the Genealogy and Succes-  
sion of their Kings; a description  
of their Court, and Camp; their  
Power and Military Discipline;  
their Courts of Justice, &c.

III. Their Ecclesiastical Affairs;  
their Conversion to the Christi-

an

an Religion, and the Propagation thereof, their Sacred Writings, their Sacraments, Rites, Ceremonies, and Church-Discipline; the decrease of the *Romish* Religion, their Contentions with the Jesuits, their Separation from the *Greek Church*, &c.

IV. Their private Oeconomy, their Books and Learning; their common Names, their Dyet, Marriages, and Polygamies, their Mechanick Arts, and Trades, their Burials, their Merchandize and Commerce, &c.

Illustrated with Copper Plates.  
By the Learned *Job Ludolphus*,  
Author of the *Ethiopic Lexicon*.  
Made *English*, by *J. P. Gent*.  
*London*, Printed for *Samuel Smith*  
Bookseller, at the *Prince's Arms*  
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1682.



